



Data storage firm's success dependent on right staff

The Commercial Appeal
Monday, October 8, 2007
By Daniel Connolly

Gayle S. Rose has some advice for anyone starting a business: Hire the right talent.



Chris Desmond/Special to The Commercial Appeal

Electronic Vaulting Systems chief storage architect Gary Aulfinger and CEO Gayle Rose offer safe and secure back-up storage for computer data that companies rely on these days. EVS offers remote data storage.

"The talent, I couldn't overemphasize that," she said. "Really, when it comes down to it, a business is made up of people, of individuals. And the leadership and the expertise of the team is the difference, usually, between success and failure."

Rose is part owner and CEO of EVS Corp., a firm founded in 2004 that's currently helping about 80 client companies make secure copies of important data. The firm can copy data to offsite centers in Memphis and Dallas. A geographic separation is meant to hedge against the chance of a disaster causing widespread damage in one of the cities.

Rose says EVS recently conducted a national search that led to the hiring of Gary Aulfinger, 41, who formerly worked as a data backup expert for FedEx Corp., the global shipping company that's the biggest employer in Memphis.

Aulfinger is involved in the company's plans to introduce a new product called EVS Enterprise Solution on Oct. 22. The service promises faster backups by recording only changes in data, not rewriting entire

files.

Aulfinger isn't the only one to join the firm recently. The staff has increased to 10 full-time workers, forcing people to squeeze into the nooks and crannies of its office on the 16th floor of White Station Tower in East Memphis. The firm plans to take over 3,000 square feet of adjoining space.

EVS is just the latest venture for Rose, 52, who is known for her philanthropic efforts and involvement in the campaign to bring the NBA's Vancouver Grizzlies to Memphis. She previously worked as CEO for a firm associated with physician and self-help author Deepak Chopra and as managing director with the Memphis office of financial services group Heritage Capital Advisors LLC.

She said network engineer Chris Chu approached her with the idea for EVS and that the two women are now joint owners who have invested heavily in the company.

Rose didn't provide exact amounts, but said the company paid "several million dollars" for the sophisticated computer equipment it needs.

She advised entrepreneurs to have plenty of cash on hand and not rely on venture capital funding.

"Whatever you think you're going to need, you're probably going to need to double that amount," she said. "And you're going to need the capacity to survive on your existing capital sources for maybe the first five years."

Rose said the firm expects to turn a profit on a cash-flow basis by the second quarter of next year. And she had

another tip for people who dream of running their own business.

"You've got to develop a model that can be replicated so that there's scale and growth," she said. "A venture firm or any kind of potential investors will look to see what the possibility for a national growth model would be."

Rose says she hopes picking the right talent will help her one day to convince outside investors that the firm, which now has a regional focus, could spread across the nation.

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