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Private Eyes NO.395
364.4% Three-Year Growth
REVENUE \$5.3million EMPLOYEES 40
FOUNDED 1999 Walnut Creek ,Calif.

What it does: Performs pre-employment background checks for companies such as Coca-Cola and E&J Gallo Winery.

Why it's growing: Interest in background checks increased after September 11, according to CEO Sandra James. Sales got another boost in 2002, when James certified her company with the Women's Business Enterprise Council, a move that allowed Private Eyes to compete for contracts as a woman-owned business. The designation has helped James land more than 80 percent of her clients.

What's note worthy: Private Eyes also checks its own candidates. In one case, an applicant for a customer service position made it to the final stages before the company's background checkers discovered she had been convicted of identity theft.