

East Bay Business Times - November 20, 2006
<http://eastbay.bizjournals.com/eastbay/stories/2006/11/20/smallb3.html>

EAST BAY BUSINESS TIMES

BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY: [Will 2007 be a better year for your business?](#)

Women pave the way

Secret behind Private Eyes is service

East Bay Business Times - November 17, 2006 by [Elizabeth Kearney, Ph.D.](#)
 Sandra James founded Private Eyes Inc. in September 1999. By 2005, the company was generating \$5.3 million in revenue with 40 on staff.

The company has Bay Area and national clients including bottling companies, wineries, distributing and trucking companies, schools and hospitals.

My first thought when I heard the name of the company was that James owned a detective agency, but I was wrong. Private Eyes does pre-employment screening, including background checks and drug and physical screening.

She had owned a mortgage credit reporting company, but when she sold it in 1998, she signed a non-compete agreement, so she began to consider other entrepreneurial options.



James.
[View Larger](#)

Private Eyes was the outgrowth of her brainstorming, but she faced stiff competition and serious IT challenges as her company evolved. One of the most critical areas was staffing. She needed a staff that put a high premium on ethics and customer service, and, of course, privacy.

The fact that 30 members of her staff have been with her three to five years indicates that she did a great job of personnel selection. The company operates on a 72-hour turnaround time. Since 90 percent of all requests meet that timeline, James is justifiably proud of her employees.

A dedicated staff is essential to the success of any company, and James' staff believes in the adage so often missing in today's business community: "Put the customer's needs first."

She recently found one member of her team hard at work at 7:30 p.m. in order to ensure that a client's reports were completed on time. This kind of dedication gives James the flexibility to build her business.

Creating opportunities for others is one of the things she enjoys most about her business. All employees hire in at the same level and all have the opportunity to move up. The company also offers extensive training, resulting in a growing level of confidence among the staff members.

She has made good use of her Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) certification and is an active member of ASTRA Women's Business Alliance, the strategic partner of WBENC that represents six Western States. Shortly after becoming certified in 2002, she did some research, found 100 companies that were members of WBENC, and listed her company and its services on their sites.

Last year she repeated the process and listed her company on 500 more company sites. She responds quickly to RFPs and many clients say Private Eyes is the best in the field.

Part of that success is thanks to her use of the Internet. Clients can receive their reports over a secure Web site. And although clients can input data on the site, most prefer to have James' staff handle that aspect of the process. James said her process provides a greater level of security for her clients as well as records that stand up to even the most stringent audits.

Sandra James

Title: President

Company: Private Eyes Inc.

Address: 190 N. Wiget Lane #220, Walnut Creek 94598

Phone: 925-927-3333

Web: www.privateeyesinc.com

Elizabeth Kearney is president of Kearney & Associates: The Experts' Alliance in San Leandro. Contact her at eiki1@earthlink.net.

[Contact the Editor](#)

[Need Assistance?](#)

[More Latest News →](#)

[Subscribe or renew online](#)

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.