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A Fast-Growing Small Business: Insight Resource Group of Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Scott Mollahan with displays created by IRG for a winery. Photo Sophie Braccini

When Inc. magazine ranked the 2010 top growing companies in the United States, Orinda's Insight Resource Group (IRG) ranked 82nd nationally with a 2,917% growth over the last three years – within its industry, business products and services, IRG ranks 7th in the country. Scott Mollahan, who founded the company with his wife Valerie, was both surprised and validated. “We are in our growing phase,” he says, “so it is normal that we’d be growing so fast.” The humble entrepreneur, who started his promotional display and printing company four years ago, operates in a very competitive field. In order to thrive, IRG had to come with a very solid offer, but also provide unique value-added services that contribute to its

customers' bottom lines.

Mollahan previously worked for Applied Graphics, where he specialized in selling in the beverage industry and learned about the printing of marketing material, packaging and gifts-with-purchase promotions. When Applied Graphics was sold, the Mollahans launched IRG in the city where they've lived since 1998. “I was tired of the San Raphael commute,” he says, “I wanted to work close to home and so do our employees.” The proximity to home makes things easier for the Mollahans, who have four children between the ages of five and eleven.

Building relationships has been at the heart of the Mollahans' success from the start. “A large part of our business is ‘point of sale’ (POS) in-store retail displays and custom racks that attract customers' attention in stores or restaurants,” explains Mollahan. “Some of them are standard and just need to have the right message printed on, but many others are custom-made. So trusting high quality and cost effective manufacturers is key.” For more than 10 years now Mollahan has been working with a Chinese company with whom he converses through Skype at least twice a week. “We work with manufacturers in the United States and Mexico as well,” says Mollahan, “one of our competitive advantages is that we deliver quality, cost effective products.”

Another of IRG's assets is the integration of the services they provide. When a customer has an idea for a campaign, IRG's team can develop the concept and bring it to reality, using different media such as metal, wood, fabric, and paper. “We do not own large printing equipment,” says Mollahan, “that makes us flexible; we don't have to push printed paper.” For example, when Sonoma winery Chateau St. Jean prepared the promotion of its

Dream Wedding Giveaway sweepstakes that included a style consultation with a Martha Stewart Weddings magazine expert, IRG created a custom display that looked like a small kitchen island.

Mollahan has also been working on an automated production management system that aggregates orders coming from different clients and allows the company to reduce its price. “In our industry, people prepare their campaigns months in advance,” says Mollahan. “If someone orders a specific rack at one time we'll quote him a price that will be his maximum. As others purchase similar products, the orders will be consolidated and the price will go down for everyone.”

Mollahan is starting to give to his biggest customers the software he developed so they can use it to track the individual performance of the displays they've acquired. “It is important for us to provide extra value to our clients,” says the entrepreneur. By the same token, IRG organized a seminar on integrated marketing with Affinitive, a firm specialized in social media marketing for the beverage industry. “We help them integrate the different aspects of marketing,” says Mollahan, “our displays can include an LCD screen with a video, printed text encourage the customers to ‘friend’ our clients on their Facebook page, and we will produce the gifts our clients will give out as part of their word of mouth campaigns.”

Today, more than 50% of IRG business is in the beverage industry, but the company is diversifying and new clients include Bay Area businesses such as Leap Frog, Bay Alarm and DJA Financial Group.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

◆ New Owners
◆ New Attitude
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business briefs

Tart Collections
3575 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette
www.tartcollections.com

Jamie and Dana Finegold launched JD Fine and company in 1996; the Tart Collection represents, in their own words, “the timeless, sultry silhouettes” that are their true calling. The clothing line is distributed in department stores and boutiques, and the Finegolds recently opened a retail store in Lafayette, between Sandy's Boutique and Radio Shack in the Clock Tower building on Mt. Diablo Blvd.

J. Rockcliff Realtors
3799 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Suite 1 (925)385-2330
89 Davis Road, Suite 100 (925)253-7000

J. Rockcliff Realtors named veteran Realtor Mike Clancy as the new vice president and manager of the company's Lafayette and Orinda offices. He is a director for both the California Association of Realtors (CAR) and Contra Costa Association of Realtors (CCAR). A licensed real estate broker since 1979, Clancy has earned the Certified Real Estate Brokerage Manager (CRB) designation and is also a Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) designee.

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

Coldwell Banker reported that it ranked first in sales volume and transactions among the San Francisco Bay Area's real estate companies in 2011, as listed in the industry trade journal REAL Trends 500 report issued at the beginning of May. The company also announced that Jason Evans has joined the company as a sales associate in its Orinda office. Evans has lived in Moraga for the last 12 years and has been involved with the Moraga Planning Commission, Moraga Design Review Board, Kiwanis, Moraga Chamber of Commerce, International Council of Shopping Centers, Urban Land Institute, National Society of Professional Engineers, National Association of Watch and Clock Makers, Diablo Valley Corvette Club, Ducks Unlimited and Pittsburgh Yacht Club.

Lamorinda Realtor Meetings Every Other Tuesday

Every other Tuesday morning LamorindaREGroup holds a free realtor meeting where new and old listings are presented and a featured speaker brings relevant information to the audience. Coming up on June 7: Kitty Cole, Real Estate Trainer, will talk about “Doing What It Takes to Be Productive in This Market.” The meetings are held from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. in the meeting room of the Lafayette Lower Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For more information go to LamorindaREGroup.com.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

- Ribbon Cutting at Zahra Boutique Salon, 3578 Mt. Diablo Blvd., May 26, 5:00 p.m.
- Business Issues/Governmental Affairs Meeting on Friday, May 27, 8:00 a.m. in the Chamber Conference Room.
- Green Business Open House on Tuesday, June 7, at noon in the Chamber Conference Room.

Moraga

- New Rheem Theater 1st Anniversary celebration June 25th, 6:00 p.m. in the Theater. Food, wine and movies will be on agenda. Save the date!
- Chamber Mixer after hours on Tuesday, June 28, 6-8:00 p.m. Co-sponsored by 5 A Rent A Space and Neighborhood Computers.

Orinda

The first Business Neighborhood Watch was held on Tuesday, May 24, at First Republic Bank in Orinda with Sergeant Neil Rafanan of the Orinda Police Department. A complete report of the meeting and details about how to promote awareness and discourage crime targeted at Orinda businesses will appear in the next issue of the Lamorinda Weekly.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com or call the office 925-377-0977

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