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Is it Time to Expand?

Tips from those who know about managing a growing business

If your business opportunities are expanding beyond your current capabilities, it might be time to expand your services. The Arizona Department of Economic Security forecasts that out of the state's 11 major industry sectors, 10 are expected to show growth for 2007, in the form of new employees, products or stores.



SCORE, a counseling service to local small-business owners, is offering a new workshop on developing your business for future growth with Business Plans—Plus. The all-day event on Feb. 13 provides lessons on marketing your product, defining your business model and financials. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Western International University, 9215 N. Black Canyon Highway, Phoenix. \$50. scorearizona.org.

Trish Bear, 38, president and CEO of I-ology, had been planning a second location since incorporating her Scottsdale-based Internet strategy and services firm in 2000. "But I didn't think I was ready until I was faced with losing a valued employee," she says.

When one of her employees announced a move to Chicago, Bear says they both were disappointed

that he'd be leaving the company. "When you have an employee with the skills and talent and the right cultural fit, you've invested time and training and you don't want to lose them," she says. And she didn't have to. Bear decided to open a Chicago office with this employee in September, and she says it's just the start of a national expansion plan.

But a second location has to make sense. Ginger Ward, 56, founder and executive director of Southwest Human Development, chose to focus her non-profit's services mostly within Maricopa County. In 25 years of helping families and children get needed resources, the organization has grown to run nearly 50 projects at once.

Maintaining a Standard

"We don't have all the projects that we have started over the years—some have gone by the wayside," Ward says. "When we

expand services, we ask the staff and directors if this is something we can take on and do well. We're not putting ourselves forward to take on every single task. My most important consideration is making sure the services the children and families get are of the highest quality."

One of those newer services is the Birth to Five Helpline, 877-705-KIDS. Parents and caregivers statewide can call this free number to receive advice on child development. "We were only going to take that on if we could have professionals answer the calls in English and Spanish," Ward says. "And we are going to keep on developing it further to make it the most efficient and effective."

For this constant evolution and expansion, Ward says it's necessary to not delegate too much. "I always understand the work, so there's no surprises to me. I'm involved at every level."

Learn more at swhd.org or i-ology.com.