

Indiana Small Business → Guide



U.S. Small Business Administration

SBA

Your Small Business Resource



2004 SBA Indiana Small Business Week Award Winners

Indiana Small Business Person of the Year

Priya Wharton
Tri Star Engineering, Inc.
Bedford

Priya Wharton is President and CEO of Tri Star Engineering. Under her leadership, revenues at Tri Star reached \$12.7 million in 2003. Tri Star Engineering was founded in 1995, with the philosophy that hard work, determination, and customer satisfaction are the keys to success. Priya Wharton used her years of defense engineering experience to bring together engineering and defense contracting professionals to form a company that would be technically competitive and focused on providing quality engineering services to the defense industry.

Tri Star Engineering proved that it could compete with the largest defense contractors when it performed its first contract at Naval Surface Warfare Center in Port Hueneme, California. Wharton's company grew from five employees to 140 employees with operations in four states. Tri Star spans the continent with offices in San Diego, California and Washington, D.C.

Becoming designated as an 8(a) company by the U. S. Small Business Administration in May 1997 helped Tri Star expand its customer base. In 1998, Tri Star experienced over 200% growth from the previous year. With the help of two SBA 7(a) loan guarantees, the company expanded its home office and extended its business lines by establishing a light manufacturing and refurbishment capability in a separate production facility near the corporate headquarters.

Tri Star received the Blue Chip Enterprise Award from Mass Mutual Insurance Company in 1999 and 2000. The company received the Indiana Growth 100 Award in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002. These awards recognize excellence in



business. Tri Star was one of three companies in Indiana recognized in all three award categories from Indiana Senator Richard Lugar – Economic Growth, Community Support and Educational Support.

Wharton received a Mechanical Engineering degree from Cleveland State University in 1979 and a Masters in Public Administration from Indiana University, Indianapolis in 1995. She is a Commissioner to the Governor's Council for Minority and Women Development. She is active with the American Society of Naval Engineers, National Defense Industrial

Association, National Association of Women Business Owners, White River Economic Development Corporation and the Bedford Chamber of Commerce.

Indiana Small Business Exporter of the Year

Mike Harmon
E.V.S. Ltd.
South Bend



E.V.S. Ltd. is a manufacturer of soft goods, interior parts, cushioning and seating for emergency vehicles. Canada provides 8% of total sales and the United

Kingdom provides 6%. The company's signature product is the Seamless Hi-BAC Safety Seat for transporting uninjured children in emergency vehicles. In many accidents, an injured parent may need emergency transportation to a medical facility. Harmon's swivel seat base product allows a child to travel safely to the hospital with an injured parent. It meets FMVSS, Triple K, and OSHA standards. He also developed seamless cushions for the seat that prevent blood-borne pathogens from migrating into the stitching and exposing the child to contaminants.

He started E.V.S. Ltd in the basement of his home in 1994 making and shipping child safety seats to ambulance manufacturers. Harmon has shown the drive and dedication it takes to be a successful entrepreneur.

To enter the European Economic Community marketplace, the safety seat must satisfy standards that exceed the certification requirements in the United States. Cost of the development and certification testing of the Hi-BAC Safety Seat will exceed \$30,000. In addition to the expansion in the European community, E.V.S. has connected with Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, that plan to refurbish existing ambulances.

Because of the company's strict adherence to government regulations, a proven record for safety, a strategy to sell internationally and an entrepreneurial drive to continuously improve the product, E.V.S. anticipates sales will reach nearly \$2 million.

Indiana Small Business Young Entrepreneurs of the Year

Andy & Chad
Baker
Indoor Signs, LLC
Bloomington



Andy and Chad Baker are lucky: their appearance and incredible work ethics are identical. The "Baker Twins," as they are known, operate a manufacturing and distribution business, which offers a small, yet growing number of products suitable for bars and restaurants. Their two main products are a unique edge-lit sign and a beverage dispenser called The Drink Tower.

Their sign is a clear piece of acrylic that is illuminated by a strip of LED lights. The lights illuminate the acrylic. The signs can be customized with a paint marker, which allows messages such as dinner or drink specials to be changed frequently.

The Drink Tower, which originated in France, can serve ninety ounces of a particular beverage; rather than the sixty ounces in a typical pitcher. The Drink Tower is a tall, acrylic tube with a tap on the bottom. Like a regular pitcher, it used at a table, but The Drink Tower is a real attention-getter, and it provides more servings.

The Bakers sell their products directly to consumers via trade shows. They also sell through a growing number of distributors. With customers in almost every state, they are increasing their international customer base with accounts in El Salvador, Ireland, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Russia.

The Baker Twins have been entrepreneurial and hard working since high school, whether it was spinning tracks with the mobile DJ business, bagging cans with their grocery delivery business or shining chrome in an auto-detailing venture. Before attending their first class at Indiana University in Bloomington, they had already started a business. The twins sold advertising for the CashCard, a small coupon card that conveniently fits in a wallet. This successful venture helped offset some of their school expenses and introduced the Bakers to the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) where they received assistance when they first started with CashCard. Since then, the SBDC has helped them throughout their business ventures and recently assisted them with obtaining their first business loan – an SBA 7(a) guaranteed loan.

Indiana Small Business Family-Owned Small Business of the Year

Bloomington
Hardware
Company, Inc.
Victoria Temple
Bloomington



Bloomington Hardware has been recognized in Bloomington since the turn of the century. The company has been owned by the Temple family