



Christina Marza

Storage Systems USA is offering different services to meet the needs of new clients as demand for traditional filing services has slackened, following the advent of electronic records. From left, President Tim Powers; Scotti Powers, vice president; and Brent Atwood, vice president of sales and marketing, at the Phillipsburg office.

Filing records in the digital age

Changing times push storage firm into software, new types of clients

BY MARTIN C. DAKS

STORAGE SYSTEMS USA started out providing file cabinets for paper-based products, but **making it** saw its traditional market begin to disappear as customers went digital.

To cope, the 30-employee, Phillipsburg-based company, which launched in 1988, decided to bring its knowledge of safe storage to a new set of customers.

"During the past few years, we saw some of our pharmaceutical and insurance clients moving to digital imaging," said founder **Tim Powers**. "Our expertise was in storage, and we wanted to stick with what we knew, so we migrated to new kinds of clients, like museums, libraries and other industries with special storage needs."

The company also embraced the digital transition, expanding services to offer document capture, storage, indexing and retrieval with specialized computer systems and software.

But re-orientating its core business of storage meant more than just developing a new

customer list — it meant shifting away from filing cabinets to pallet racks, Powers said.

"We do a lot of work with museums," he said. "During a typical stretch of time, a museum will only exhibit about 20 percent of its collection. The other 80 percent has to be kept in a secure environment that's also accessible."

Storage Systems helped **Genzyme Corp.**, a Cambridge, Mass.-based biotechnology firm, "recapture a significant amount of space" in its 10,000-square-foot Ridgefield facility, said **Jason Hartman**, Genzyme's maintenance and facilities manager. "Storage Systems provides us with high density document storage equipment, mobile warehouse racking systems and other equipment," he said.

Storage Systems has been growing: Powers said the firm's annual sales are at about \$6 million, and expects to reach \$12 million in the next three years. But he harbors some concerns about the future.

"The state budget cuts are a source of worry for us," he said. "Publicly funded institutions, like libraries, may have to cut back on their spending. Colleges may also see their budgets shrink — but

at the same time, we understand that enrollment is up at many colleges and universities, which could help boost their finances."

Right now, specialty industries, like medical-related companies, help fuel the growth, "since we provide everything from casework in the laboratories and the nurse's stations to stainless-steel cabinets in exam and operating rooms," Powers said. But instead of relying on existing markets, he's scouting new business areas, including collegiate and professional sports.

And he's engaging with police departments, offering equipment and uniform lockers, and specialized units that can store objects held as evidence. "We're continuing to grow," Powers said. "I anticipate taking on up to 10 new people over the next two years. As long as we stay innovative, we can continue to expand." ♦

E-mail to mdaks@njbiz.com

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CONTACT:

Call Karen Hopper, director of the institute, at (856) 225-6351 or fambiz@camden.rutgers.edu.

SUITE ESCAPE

Have you ever played a musical instrument?

Stephen K. Jones

President and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital



Yes. I still make music with my Pearl drums and Zildjian cymbals each week.

Carla Katz

Of counsel, Fox & Fox LLP

I used to play the guitar, badly. I downright tortured "House of the Rising Sun" in front of an audience once. I still have my cherished Ovation guitar, and now my daughter uses it to torment folk songs, too.



Doug Kennedy

New Jersey state president, Capital One Bank



I briefly played the baritone horn in my high school marching band. I was terrible, so for my sake and theirs, I gave it up.

Jim Kocsi

State director, U.S. Small Business Administration

Yes and no. In fourth grade, everyone had to play a plastic instrument called a flutophone. I was horrible at it, and that ended my music career.



Carl Goldberg

Partner, Roseland Property Co.



Like many before me, I played the guitar to find girls. Unfortunately, all I found was a summer job.

Next week, the July panelists talk about their other dream jobs.

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