

continuous goal setting and benchmarking to support of local and state causes and organizations. And that's good for everyone—since opening in Peru in 1990, the company has increased sales and employment, added more than 20 new product lines, reduced costs, boosted on-time deliveries, cut scrap and reduced defects.

“With excellence comes the ability to stay profitable,” Myers says. “To be able to continually improve and increase sales every year, you have to continually reduce your own costs as well as help customers reduce their costs.” Besides winning the BKD honor, the company was a 2008 finalist for the Indiana Chamber of Commerce’s Small Business of the Year honors.

Other manufacturing and distribution finalists included:

- **CIM Audio Visual** in Columbus, which since 1983 has focused on the A/V needs of Indiana schools and colleges, as well as businesses and churches. In a relatively short period of time, the company has doubled its annual sales volume as well as personnel and now serves customers in 13 states.

- Indianapolis-based **Heat Exchanger Design**, which was growing quickly but decided it was time to pause and assess how well prepared it was for the changing needs of its clients by writing a new strategic growth plan.

Among the objectives were evaluating staffing needs, cross-training employees, offering onsite education, boosting employee satisfaction, controlling costs and supporting locally educated



“While a simple concept, it’s a valuable tool,” says Mirko Marich (left) with partner Milan Kesic of Staff Source in Hammond, on the staffing company’s “best of the best” candidate listings updated online.

engineering students through internships.

- **Kem Krest** in Elkhart, which in less than eight years grew from a \$10 million firm into a \$100 million company with the help of a productivity-enhancing Goal Development Plan and new marketing efforts that are improving visibility and both internal and external communications. Kem Krest is a provider of warehousing and distribution services, pick-and-pack fulfillment, kitting, assembly and other value-added services.

- Third-party logistics provider **SGI** of Indianapolis, which helped a client achieve a more cost-effective way to produce package literature inserts—eliminating the waste of overproduced material, reducing overall

program costs, and reducing picking errors. SGI designed a new on-demand printing and fulfillment program that is saving the client at least a quarter million dollars annually.

SERVICE

Staff Source is a Hammond-based staffing agency that provides client companies with quality workers and immediate staffing assistance. It maintains a large database of qualified workers, and can match client company needs with the skills of specific employees in the database.

But the company saw that there were missed opportunities in the direct-hire segment of the industry. “Most notably was the frustration that came with knowing we had a great job candidate in their field of expertise, but didn’t have an open job order for him or her,” says partner Mirko Marich.

The company’s AvailableCandidateList.com Web site is a new way to help some of the qualified workers in its database find gainful

employment. Every week the company interviews more than 100 job candidates, and the cream of the crop in terms of work ethic, skill and presentation are presented in the monthly updates of the Available Candidate List that is distributed to more than 4,000 existing and prospective client companies. Since launching the concept about a year ago, the company has seen a dramatic increase direct hire sales.

“While a simple concept, it’s proven to be a valuable tool, for both Staff Source on the business development aspect of our business and for companies to use in their recruiting efforts,” Marich says. “Conventional sales efforts have limitations in that timing is everything.

This approach minimizes the time a company like ours spends by reducing time placed on sales calls and allowing a greater emphasis on customer care, recruiting and providing a highest level of service to our client base. The main advantage is the client or perspective client has the opportunity to see the best of the best and can immediately decide if that candidate is the type of person they are seeking for their current needs in a very quick and timely fashion.”

Other service finalists included:

- Carmel-based **ChaCha Search Inc.**, which allows users to ask any question via text message and receive a snappy answer in a minute or two. The latest venture from serial entrepreneur Scott Jones, ChaCha is enjoying explosive growth, with half a million users and more than 10 million queries since the mobile text service