

Plan Express expands with Dallas, San Francisco offices

BY ROB ROBERTSON

DeWayne Adamson's blueprint for success is blueprints.

Over the past decade his company, Plan Express, Inc., has grown from a low-tech logistics shop to a completely automated provider of construction document management

Plan Express, Inc.
Back-end logistics provider for construction companies

Headquarters: 2145

Treasurer Drive

CEO: DeWayne

Adamson

Annual revenue: \$12 million

Employees: 75

Phone: 843-2142

Web site:

www.planexpress.net

services, delivering blueprints and other construction documents to contractors and engineers across the country.

Today, thanks to a fresh infusion of venture capital, Plan Express is pursuing an aggressive growth strategy that will expand the Memphis-based company's footprint from coast to coast.

Last week, Plan Express opened its newest logistics center in Dallas, its seventh nationwide. This week Adamson is signing a lease for the company's eighth facility, to be located in San Francisco. The San Francisco office is expected to open this summer and will be the company's first operation on the West Coast.

Adamson, who founded Plan Express in 1994 and is the only CEO the company has ever had, hopes to have 11 offices up and running by the end of the year. Office No. 9 will be in the Southeast he



Adamson



Francis

says, "most likely in Florida."

Plan Express is currently generating about \$1 million per month in revenue and growing at a rate of better than 50% per year. The company expects to generate revenues of more than \$1.5 million per month by year end to reach its goal of a \$20 million run-rate in 2005.

"By the end of next year we expect a run-rate of \$40 million-\$50 million," Adamson says.

Financing the company's new growth strategy was made possible in late 2004, when the company secured a \$5.5 million equity investment led by SSM Partners of Memphis and Frontier Capital of Charlotte, N.C. SSM spent three months evaluating Plan Express before making its investment.

"When we look at companies at this stage, we're looking at management and economics," says SSM Partners' Robert Covington. "Plan Express had very good unit economics, excellent management and what we think is a big market opportunity."

Besides the physical expansion, Plan

Express is also using its venture capital to invest in the latest technology, infrastructure improvements and the addition of top-notch leadership.

Earlier this year the company made its first significant move to get that leadership, hiring Antony Francis as its new president and chief operating officer.

Francis most recently headed up customer operations for NewRoads, Inc., of Atlanta, a provider of outsourced catalog and e-commerce order management and fulfillment.

Francis also spent 12 years with FedEx Corp., where he worked as European

studies the best ways to scale the company's technology as the company grows. His knowledge and strong relations with FedEx haven't hurt, either.

Plan Express customers use Web interfacing to place blueprints in an "online plan room" where the plans can be viewed, manipulated and downloaded. The documents can then be printed for overnight delivery via FedEx or for same-day pickup at participating FedExKinkos locations.

The platform also allows customers to track changes and store documents in a digital archive.

"We're growing well and we have to keep up, not only physically but technologically," Francis says. "Technology is at the heart of our business, after all."

This year Plan Express says it will deliver more than 300,000 sets of construction plans to more than 250 corporations, architects, developers and contractors across the U.S. The bulk of that shipping load will go to FedEx.

"I would love to call FedEx a partner," Adamson says, "but it's a customer-vendor relationship."

Adamson says that relationship has been essential to his business.

"They have sent over engineers to help us with productivity, IT consultants, solutions providers, you name it," he says. "We've gone from 20-30 packages per day to 1,500 per day and growing."

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Robert Covington

SSM Partners

controller and as a managing director in the Finance Division before serving as vice president of FedEx's e-Commerce and Logistics business in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Besides running the day-to-day operations in Memphis, Francis says he also

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