
In The News

Conde Group, Inc. **Ranked #33**
50 WOMEN-OWNED
BUSINESSES

Ranked by 2005 Gross Revenue

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Attention to Detail Sends Staffing Firm's Revenues Soaring

Conde Group Clients Include NASA, Nissan, Qualcomm, Toyota

BY BRAD GRAVES

Karen Conde has staying power.

While working as a corporate executive in 2002, Conde, now 51, was involved in an automobile accident that badly injured another woman. A lawsuit followed. The experience sent her into a depression.

Then her employer decided to lay her off.

However, Conde had a good support system at home, and, in time, she was able to lay a foundation for not one, but two enterprises.

One is Forgotten Victims, a nonprofit that helps people who caused an auto accident and need help recovering. The caveat: The accident must not be alcohol or drug-related.

The other enterprise she started is the **Conde Group**, a staffing firm that matches up employers with people who have specialized work skills, such as highly specific information technology knowledge.

On The Fast Track

The Conde Group ranked 24th on the Business Journal's most recent list of San Diego County's 100 Fastest-Growing Private Companies, increasing revenues 147 percent from the start of 2005 through 2007.

Founded in 2003, the firm places employees in IT and project management jobs, as well as jobs in finance, accounting and sales. Conde Group's client roster includes American Specialty Health, MedImpact, Nissan North America, Qualcomm and Toyota Financial Services.

One recent client is NASA. In late December, the Conde Group was working to fill a scheduler's job for the Constellation project, NASA's effort to return explorers to the moon.

That job is in Houston. Conde Group does not limit itself to San Diego. In fact, its six employees are widely scattered. One is in Atlanta while another is in New York.



Photo credit: Michael S. Domine

Karen Conde runs a fast-growing staffing business that matches employers with job seekers who possess very specialized skills, especially in information technology.

Their job is matching employers against a list of 75,000 contractors. The work requires Conde's placement employees to be familiar with specialized technology from software makers such as Hyperion, Oracle and SAP.

Often the work requires filling jobs on short notice.

A Good Matchmaker

Conde says some competitors offer clients a large selection of candidates with no assurance that any matches the job at hand. She prides herself on offering just a few well-matched candidates. She says a client can be assured a potential contractor has the technical expertise for the job, and is free to evaluate the person on other criteria—such as how that worker meshes with the company culture.

Attention to detail has not gone unnoticed.

In May, Conde Group said it entered a partnership with Optimum InfoSolutions, a Singapore-based information technology services firm that generates \$50 million in revenues and has 900 employees, according to a news release.

"Conde Group's reach and track record of offering quality services is truly aligned

with our goals and values," Optimum President Arvind Verma said at the time.

The economy of 2009 is giving Conde one more opportunity to display her staying power.

Customers in the financial and auto industries have cut back, she says. Conde reports revenue for the third quarter was down 20 percent from the same period in 2007.

The unhappy discovery prodded her into expanding her business in new directions, such as staffing for sales positions. Conde herself has a sales and marketing background.

Additionally, she has been looking into the health care, interactive media, entertainment and aerospace sectors.

With the new push, 2008's revenues should beat 2007's by 7 percent.

The downturn is "allowing us to really diversify our business," Conde said. She predicts that auto and finance work will come back someday.

The change in the economy has given her some sleepless nights.

But, Conde said, "How you get through difficult times defines you as a person."