

INNOVATORS

ENTREPRENEURS

visionary

SECOND STAGE

# Michigan 50

Companies  
to Watch

Growing Businesses



**MICHIGAN 50**  
COMPANIES TO WATCH<sup>SM</sup>  
CELEBRATING SECOND-STAGE ENTREPRENEURS



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**Michigan Companies to Watch 2011**

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The re-invention of Michigan begins with the inspiration and confidence that led each of these 50 honorees to pursue a dream.



The Michigan Economic Development Corporation salutes the 2011 class of Michigan 50 Companies to Watch.

## Saluting entrepreneurial spirit

### Saluting the entrepreneurial spirit that is renewing Michigan's economy

The topic of entrepreneurship is one dear to me, and more to the point, central to my plans for reinventing Michigan and reviving the spirit of entrepreneurship that drove the growth of many of our largest and most innovative corporations. For that reason, it is my pleasure to salute the 2011 class of Michigan 50 Companies to Watch.

Going into business for yourself has always been the American dream. I want it to become the Michigan dream. Let's encourage more of our young people, and the young and venturesome at heart of any vintage, to follow the example of the innovators being honored here tonight. They have taken risks, perhaps mortgaged their future and survived a gauntlet of obstacles to launch a successful company, one capable of competing in the marketplace and creating jobs and opportunity for our citizens.

Today, small businesses are the source of innovation and job creation. Those employing fewer than 500 are now creating most of the new jobs. We must move aggressively to expand the start-up sector which is the source of most of our new products and job opportunities. The hour is late, and our competitors around the nation and the globe are not waiting for us to catch up.

Michigan is blessed with world-class assets—our natural resources, our universities, our manufacturing and industrial base and more importantly, our people. To build on this foundation, we are taking steps necessary to instill a more entrepreneurial culture by example and through our educational institutions and creating a tax and regulatory climate in which innovation can flourish.

Michiganders are strong, resilient and ready to reinvent Michigan. It starts with the inspiration and confidence that led to each of our 50 honorees to pursue a dream. We in state government will do our part, using every means available to us to assure your success on which our state's success depends.

Best wishes,

Rick Snyder  
Governor





When it comes to transforming Michigan's economy, the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch honorees are playing a critical role! These growth entrepreneurs are creating new products and services, developing new technologies and industries, and establishing national and global markets that bring new dollars into our state.

Companies to Watch not only celebrates the many contributions that second-stagers make, but also recognizes the challenges they encounter. People often believe that when an entrepreneur has made it past the startup phase, it's all smooth sailing. But second stage brings on a new set of issues—something that

Ed Lowe knew all too well.

Ed introduced Kitty Litter in 1947, and by the late 1950s, the business was making more than \$1 million in sales. Like any startup entrepreneur, Ed initially struggled to attract customers and build a market, but success introduced different problems to tackle. Among them:

- Expanding physical facilities and improving manufacturing efficiencies to meet the growing demand for Kitty Litter.
- Developing formal processes and procedures to provide product consistency, improve quality and scale the business.
- Bringing in a new level of talent, including experts in finance, advertising, engineering and operations.

Learning to loosen the reins and delegate was one of the most difficult changes Ed had to make in second stage, for he loved having his hands in every aspect of the business. Yet he knew that if the business was going to continue to grow, he would have to stop wearing so many hats and work on the big picture.

One of the things that helped Ed most during second stage was talking with other entrepreneurs—people who were going through the same growing pains he was. And though Companies to Watch is primarily about recognition and celebration, it also gives growth entrepreneurs from around the state a chance to connect.

That's important because entrepreneurs view the world from a special lens. They see the extraordinary in the ordinary and turn problems into possibilities. They also have the tenacity and temperament to act on those opportunities, which is why Michigan's future remains bright. Growth entrepreneurs continue to question, innovate and surmount whatever obstacles they encounter.

Congratulations to the 2011 class of Michigan Companies to Watch honorees! Take great pride in what you've already accomplished—and remember that your hard work is making Michigan a more vibrant, prosperous state.

*Darlene Lowe*

Darlene Lowe  
Chairman  
Edward Lowe Foundation



## Navigating through second stage

## Congratulations to the 2011 Award Winners

Michigan Small Business  
Person of the Year  
**Michael J. Uckele,**  
CEO and President  
*Uckele Health & Nutrition*

Michigan Jeffrey Butland  
Family-Owned  
Business of the Year  
**Amy Engelsman, CEO**  
*Proos Manufacturing Inc.*

Small Business  
Exporter of the Year  
*National, Michigan  
and Midwest Region*  
**Darryl J. Barlett, Vice President  
and General Manager**  
*k-Space Associates Inc.*

Minority Small  
Business Champion  
*Michigan and Midwest Region*  
**Cynthia A. Grubbs,**  
Small Business Liaison  
*Michigan Economic Development  
Corporation*

Women in Business Champion  
**Michelle A. Richards,**  
Executive Director  
*Center for Empowerment  
& Economic Development*

Veteran Small  
Business Champion  
**Matt Sherwood, Assistant Director**  
*VetBizCentral Inc.*

Michigan Financial  
Services Champion  
**Jane Sherzer, President**  
*Michigan Certified Development  
Corporation*

Small Business  
Journalist of the Year  
**Michael F. Carmichael, Online Editor  
and Contributing Writer**  
*Corp! Magazine*

Innovation of the Year  
**Marcos Dantus, President/CEO**  
*BioPhotonic Solutions Inc.*



Michigan Small Business  
Counselors of the Year  
**Lorne Greenwood, SCORE Counselor**  
*SCORE Chapter 18*

**Lola Aré, Center Director**  
*Oakland County Business Center, Michigan SBTDC*

Government Contracting Award  
**Frederick (Rick) Darter, President/CEO**  
**Ken Gorinski, Vice-President**  
**Dave Nannini, COO**  
*Rave Computer*

Main Street USA Best Small Business  
**Chad Fachezski, Owner**  
*Biker Garage 101*

Michigan 50  
Companies to Watch  
see pages 12–36

# Economic Impact of the 2011 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch

**Economic Impact in 2010**  
**\$290 million in total annual revenue**  
34 percent increase in total annual revenue compared to 2009

**1,581 full-time equivalent employees**  
1,429 in Michigan • 152 out of state

**527 net new jobs projected for 2011**  
489 in Michigan • 39 out of state

**Increasing Impact**  
From 2007 through 2010, these companies generated \$892 million in revenue and added 633 employees (both in Michigan and out of state), reflecting a 66 percent increase in revenue and 67 percent increase in jobs for the four-year period. That translates into a 19 percent annual revenue growth and 19 percent annual growth in employees.

These companies project continued growth in 2011, with a 48 percent revenue increase and 33 percent growth in employees (both in Michigan and out of state) compared to 2010. If their projections hold, these companies will have generated \$1.3 billion in revenue and added 1,161 employees over the last five years—a 146 percent increase in revenue and 122 percent increase in jobs since 2007.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 (projected)
Revenues in millions	\$175	\$211	\$216	\$290	\$429
Employees*	948	1,183	1,298	1,581	2,108

\* full-time equivalent in Michigan and out of state

Region	# of Companies
Detroit .....	12
Ann Arbor .....	9
Grand Rapids .....	9
Kalamazoo.....	5
Lansing.....	6
Traverse City .....	6
Bay County .....	1
Clare .....	1
Upper Peninsula .....	1

Business Sector	# of Companies
Manufacturing.....	18
Information technology .....	5
Computer systems design.....	3
Scientific R&D .....	3
Technical consulting services.....	3
Administrative/support services .....	2
Advertising/related services.....	2
Food services.....	2
Health care .....	2
Wholesale trade .....	2
Engineering and related services .....	1
Information/media .....	1
Insurance services .....	1
Internet .....	1
Management consulting.....	1
Real estate, rental and leasing .....	1
Retail trade .....	1
Specialized design services .....	1

Economic impact

# Alumni update: a quick look at past honorees' progress

Company, City Highest Ranking Official	2011 Projected FTE* Growth	Revenue Growth		Milestones
		2010	2011 (projected)	
Accuri Cytometers, <i>Ann Arbor</i> Jeff Williams, CEO	17.7%	66%	50%	Expanded globally, diversified into the clinical market and appointed a new CEO.
Atomic Object, <i>Grand Rapids</i> Carl Erickson, president	25.5%	20%	25%	Made the Inc. 5000 list and received the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility.
Billhighway, <i>Troy</i> Vince Thomas, CEO	38.6%	86%	100%	Introduced new capability so users can collect donations online; gained several new major clients.
BlueWare, <i>Cadillac</i> Rose Harr, CEO	98.8%	22%	40%	Gained clients nationally, as well as in England and Ireland. Hired an English managing director.
Covenant Eyes, <i>Owosso</i> Ronald DeHaas, president/CEO	10.5%	20%	20%	Created a standard rating system that assigns age-appropriateness to websites, much like ratings used for movies.
EBW Electronics, <i>Holland</i> Cory Steeby, president	20%	350%	200%	Shifted focus to LED lighting and diversified into the automotive, office furniture and commercial lighting markets.
Elite Cleanroom Services, <i>Lapeer</i> Robert Schodowski, general manager	17.4%	30%	30%	Expanded customer base, products and services. Diversified into the foreign automotive, furniture and housing markets.
Emagine Entertainment, <i>Troy</i> Paul Glantz, founder/chairman	25.6%	5%	20%	Opened a new theater in Rochester Hills, and its Royal Oak venue is under construction to accommodate a bowling alley.
EnovateIT, <i>Canton</i> Fred Calero, president	21.5%	102%	50%	Transitioned from reseller to manufacturer. Products have been positively received by both national and international markets.
FISHER/UNITECH, <i>Troy</i> Charles Hess, president/CEO	18.4%	14.4%	30%	Acquired CADventure, which allowed both industrial and geographical diversification, leading to a wider client base throughout the Midwest.
Forensic Fluids Laboratories, <i>Kalamazoo</i> Bridget Lorenz Lemberg, CEO	25%	63%	75%	Secured the No. 167 spot on the Inc. 500 list. Added employee benefits, bonuses and perks to retain and attract top-notch talent.
ForeSee Results, <i>Ann Arbor</i> Larry Freed, president/CEO	40%	25%	30%	Expanded its customer-satisfaction measurement capabilities from the Web to stores, call centers, social media and mobile apps and sites; opened new U.K. office to continue international growth.
Freedom Finishing, <i>Benton Harbor</i> Gloria Ender, president	100%	20%	60%	Secured four new contracts, awarded grants from the IRLEE and MMTC. Diversified into exercise equipment as well as outdoor and office furniture.
GS Engineering, <i>Houghton</i> Glen Simula, president	11.6%	21%	20%	Received a five-year IDIQ contract under the SBIR program for lightweight military vehicle kits.
Integrated Nonclinical Development Solutions, <i>Ann Arbor</i> James Herman, president	31.6%	52%	20%	Began a multiyear IT project and expanded a drug-development consulting project that led to hiring new employees.
KM International, North Branch Ron Macey, president	32.1%	46%	40%	Finalized R&D on two new equipment offerings, which will significantly boost revenue after they go to market.
New-Tech, a division of Zeigler Enterprises, <i>Midland</i> Bonnie Ziegler, president	21.1%	23%	10%	Improved manufacturing processes and increased customer base.
Niowave, <i>Lansing</i> Terry Grimm, president	25%	76%	30-40%	Successfully operated a superconducting electron injector within its facility, the first private entity in the world to do so.
Online Tech, <i>Ann Arbor</i> Yan Ness, CEO	20.4%	30%	22%	Launched OTManage and Cloud Computing products. Developed automated system for client portal and enjoyed record net profit for 2010.
Pure Visibility, <i>Ann Arbor</i> Catherine Juon, CEO	22.2%	29.5%	20%	Expanded client base. Received both FastTrack and Entrepreneurs of Distinction awards.
See Progress, <i>Brighton</i> David Henderson, CEO	18.9%	10%	40%	Implemented text message updates and Facebook advertising features to AutoWatch. Launched eEstimate, an online estimating system.
Standard Components, <i>Sterling Heights</i> James Wilkins, Jr., CEO	15.4%	101%	20%	Gained clients from the aerospace industry, while retaining existing automotive clients.
Stewart Manufacturing, <i>Hermansville</i> Gregory Stewart, president	12.4%	33%	60%	Diversified into the hydraulic components industry, which includes agriculture, mining and construction.
VanAire, <i>Gladstone</i> William VanDeVusse, CEO	7.1%	11.5%	14.3%	Opened second manufacturing facility in Houston, Texas. Launched a quality initiative to become ISO 9001 compliant.
* Full-time equivalent employees				

# Cultivating corporate culture to grow second-stage businesses

by Jan Anderson

## Menlo Innovations, Ann Arbor

When you walk through the door at Menlo Innovations, you're launched into a unique environment that screams TEAMWORK! They've done away with offices and cubicles; the only personal space for each person is a one-foot by one-foot locker. Humor and whimsy of all kinds (think Viking helmets, noisemakers and such) are used to boost productivity and keep the overall happiness quotient high. Joy and happiness are a big deal at Menlo—part of the bottom line and part of a culture that is building killer software apps.



Richard Sheridan  
president

Founded by Richard Sheridan, Thomas Meloche, James Goebel and Robert Simms in 2001, Menlo is modeled on Thomas Edison's Invention Factory in Menlo Park, N.J. Discarding the "isolated genius" theory of



The expansive floor plan at Menlo keeps communication open and creativity high.

uring the last decade, successful second-stage entrepreneurs in Michigan have matured as leaders. They've taken their companies from startups to growth-oriented organizations that are competitive locally, regionally, nationally and globally. They've spun out new product lines from established platforms, invented new technologies and pioneered new industries. And as they've made a name for themselves as leaders and created livelihoods for their employees, they're transforming Michigan's business landscape.

Part of this journey has been an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the power and potential inherent in a company's corporate culture. When leaders consciously focus on creating the culture they desire, motivate their employees and share their vision with customers, their excitement, innovation and commitment feeds growth. Two 2006 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch award winners are demonstrating this: Menlo Innovations LLC ([www.menloinnovations.com](http://www.menloinnovations.com)) and V.I.O. Inc. ([www.vio-pov.com](http://www.vio-pov.com)).

invention, Edison believed that by bringing the right people together in the right environment, world-changing innovations could be produced regularly. Today, the Ann Arbor version of the Invention Factory has consciously created a corporate culture of teamwork and continuous dialogue that promotes service and creativity in software development.

There must be something to the theory because Menlo has been growing rapidly. For example, between 2006 and 2009 revenue increased by 70 percent. Menlo doubled its employees from 12 to 24, and in addition trained another 30 or so subcontractors in its methods.

When it comes to national recognition, the company made *Inc.* magazine's 500/5000 list four years in a row, consistently being recognized as one of the fastest growing privately held companies in the United States. Menlo also won five Alfred P. Sloan Foundation awards for workplace flexibility and has twice been named to the WorldBlu List of Most Democratic Workplaces.

"What I've been talking about lately is the intentional culture we've created here that's focused on what I like to call the business value of joy," says Menlo's president, Rich Sheridan. "Of course, people look at me kind of funny and say, 'Rich, you're a software design and development firm. Why are you talking about joy?'"

Sheridan says that people get it after a little discussion. "Given a choice, they want joyful people working on their project. They link words like creativity, imagination, innovation, productivity, engagement, speed and quality with words like joy and happiness."

For the Menlo team joy is defined, in part, by results. "One of the most tangible measurements of joy for us," Sheridan continues, "is when our software is put out into

the world and is enjoyably used by large numbers of the people for whom it was intended. We help make that happen by using an anthropological approach. We go out to study our customers in their native environment. Then we bring that information back into our energizing, exciting, crazy environment where we do the work—where everything we do is focused on teamwork, creativity and helping to create joy for everyone, especially our customers."

Yet, Sheridan believes that being conscious about corporate culture is a critical part of success. "A new company has a unique opportunity to create a corporate culture. Most companies get what I call a default culture, hiring people without thinking about the attitudes, behaviors and style of workers they want."

According to Sheridan, the creation and maintenance of a corporate culture becomes harder when a company reaches second stage. "As the CEO, you don't get to oversee your culture every moment of the day. So you have to mentor key team leaders about your desired culture so they can propagate it as you grow.

"It's hard work," he continues. "Every company gets a culture, but you don't get a good one for free. You have to focus on what you really desire, work at it, and be thoughtful about it. But I believe that companies that differentiate themselves in the world are the ones that intentionally focus on their culture."

## V.I.O., Marquette

V.I.O. operates primarily as a virtual organization from its Marquette location, reaching around the world via the Internet to sell its professional-grade, point-of-view (POV) camera systems. The company focuses on designing small, rugged, hands-free, wearable and vehicle-mounted cameras that capture high-quality video in challenging environments, such as skiing, skateboarding or mountain biking.

Ingrained in the company culture is a commitment to retaining homegrown talent—most of their 15 employees have been affiliated with Northern Michigan University—as well as attracting new professionals to its Upper Peninsula location.

"There are a lot of young people in the creative class who would feel the need to look beyond Marquette and Michigan for opportunities if companies like ours weren't here," V.I.O. president, Craig Mattson explains. "We're committed to maintaining and growing the culture we've developed and to keeping those individuals in our



V.I.O.'s latest product, the POV-HD is geared to capturing high-definition video in rough terrain.

community. It's almost impossible to quantify how important that is to Michigan's future as well as our own."

That commitment has produced results. Between 2007 and 2010, V.I.O. experienced 300 percent growth in annual sales from one pioneering niche product: the POV-1, its first digital camera.

V.I.O. sells directly through its own website and through an Internet distribution network of international niche partners and domestic partners such as Backcountry.com, B&H Foto & Electronics Corp. and REI.com. Currently, about half of V.I.O.'s sales are international, and the majority of domestic sales are out of state. Customers include action sports enthusiasts and those involved with public safety, law enforcement, military and security.

A University of Michigan graduate, Mattson says another hallmark of the company culture is a history of collaboration with Michigan universities and the U.S. military. One example has been their four-year association with the Army Research Laboratory in Maryland, building cameras that are useful in various military scenarios. The partnership has generated a significant rise in sales, as well as jobs, bringing direct benefits to the Marquette community, the U.P. and the state.

As a result of recently developed core technology and new high-definition electronics and optics, Mattson predicts 2011 product launches will lead to record-breaking growth and the opportunity to hire additional highly skilled people who want to live the active lifestyle that the company culture personifies.



Craig Mattson  
president

Although they have two very different approaches, products and customer bases, V.I.O. and Menlo Innovations are demonstrating the power of a clearly defined corporate culture—the power to facilitate innovation and creativity, attract and retain talent, and generate growth for Michigan's economy.



## Action Fabricators Inc. Grand Rapids

### At a glance:

Jon Rudolph, president/CEO

Founded in 1983

Current leadership since 2006

Primary business:  
manufactures adhesive-backed products

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
70 in 2010 • 75 expected in 2011

[www.actionfab.com](http://www.actionfab.com)

Action Fabricators is stuck on you—or, at least, its clients. The company converts adhesive-backed foams, plastics, tapes and other materials for use in industrial, manufacturing and medical applications.

Action Fabricators has made a number of strategic moves in recent years to accelerate growth:

- In 2000 it obtained ISO/TS 16949:2002 certification, enabling it to supply advanced technological components for electric cars.
- In 2008 Action Fabricators built a new 70,000-square-foot facility that includes on-site clean rooms for manufacturing, inspection and assembly.
- In 2009 it created a new division, Laminin Medical, to serve customers who require advanced contract manufacturing of medical devices and other health-care products. (The division's name comes from the laminin protein which functions as a cell adhesion molecule in the human body.)

The launch of Laminin Medical has already led to new opportunities, says CEO Jon Rudolph. For example, last year Action Fabricators partnered with a new medical device company that will offer the first 100 percent medical-grade acupuncture wristband. This patent-pending device helps relieve nausea for individuals undergoing chemotherapy or suffering from postoperative vomiting. Action Fabricators will be manufacturing the wristbands and has an equity stake in the new company.



## Alto Precision Inc. Grand Rapids

### At a glance:

Dave Owen, owner

Founded in 1982

Current leadership since 1982

Primary business: manufacturer of  
automated assembly equipment

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
38 in 2010 • 40 expected in 2011

[www.altoprecision.com](http://www.altoprecision.com)

A provider of automated assembly and test equipment, Alto Precision Inc. serves a wide variety of markets including automotive, furniture, aerospace, medical and transportation.

The company designs and builds high quality products that range from weld fixtures that may assemble an automotive exhaust system to a totally automated machine that assembles a complete drawer slide system. Most of this complicated equipment requires sophisticated computer interfaces and electronics, which Alto designs and builds in-house.

Staying on top of new technology has been key to Alto's success. For example, cutting-edge software and computer equipment enables its mechanical design department to provide timely, accurate designs and its fabrication and machining departments to achieve intricate requirements.

Alto has an employee-centric culture and has operated as an open-book management company for more than 15 years. "If you focus on employees first, your employees will, in turn, make sure all of your customers are treated with the utmost respect," says owner Dave Owen.

Committed to its community, in 2002 Alto launched a foundation, Pursuing a Dream, which provides outdoor activities, such as hunting and fishing events, for physically and mentally disabled people. Among other philanthropic activities, Alto funds an engineering scholarship program at Calvin College.



A reseller of printing, copying and faxing solutions, Applied Imaging is Michigan's largest independent provider of Ricoh, HP, Kyocera and Canon office products.

Superior customer service is among the company's strengths. In contrast to competitors that rely on regional or national warehouses with overnight delivery, Applied Imaging's distribution system enables its technical staff to complete 98 percent of

support calls on the same day.

Not being tied to a single manufacturer is also key to Applied Imaging's success, allowing it to source optimal solutions for clients. What's more, the company has a proven process for analyzing document workflow that saves clients anywhere from 9 to 45 percent, and its document management solution can produce even better results.

Through specialized software, Applied Imaging can remotely monitor service, supply and maintenance needs of clients—a huge advantage over competitors who only offer on-site repair. This software helps Applied Imaging know when clients may be experiencing functional problems and other issues. "It is an invaluable tool," says president John Lowery. "We correct over 53 percent of our calls over the network within minutes. Clients love it."



For Bay View Food Products, being in a pickle is a plus. The family business, now in its third generation, grades and brines fresh

pickling cucumbers grown by Michigan farmers for producers of finished pickle products.

Founded in 1946, the company made a strategic decision in the late 1990s when it added a subsidiary, Mr. Chips, to manufacture pickle and pepper products for the food service industry. Although a risky move at the time, Mr. Chips proved to be a wise investment that has enabled Bay View Foods to work with existing customers—and enter new markets. What's more, the company's vertical integration allows for added competitiveness and the ability to control the quality and quantity of raw materials needed for final products.

In an extremely competitive market, Bay View Foods has won a reputation for high quality and uninterrupted supply of products. "Continuous innovation in our manufacturing processes has given us this reputation," says president Joseph Janicke, "and improving current manufacturing processes is a daily focus." With that in mind, the company has its own in-house engineers and fabrication teams so it can make improvements and adapt to changes quickly.



## Applied Imaging Grand Rapids

### At a glance:

John Lowery, president

Founded in 1986

Current leadership since 1986

Primary business: information technology

Sites in Michigan: 5 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
99 in 2010 • 121 expected in 2011

[www.appliedimaging.com](http://www.appliedimaging.com)



## Bay View Food Products Co./Mr. Chips Inc. Pinconning

### At a glance:

Joseph Janicke, president

Founded in 1946

Current leadership since 1982

Primary business: brines cucumbers and  
manufactures pickle products

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.bayviewfoods.com](http://www.bayviewfoods.com)



## Biophotonic Solutions Inc. East Lansing

### At a glance:

Marcos Dantus, president/CEO

Founded in 2003

Current leadership since 2003

Primary business: laser pulse technology

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
7 in 2010 • 9 expected in 2011

[www.biophotonicsolutions.com](http://www.biophotonicsolutions.com)

Commercializing technology developed at Michigan State University, BioPhotonic Solutions Inc. (BSI) has quickly become a global leader in ultrafast laser pulse shaping and compression, allowing lasers to be optimized by a computer rather than manually.

Like noise-canceling earphones, BSI's instruments remove unwanted phase distortions in laser pulses. This is particularly important for ultrashort laser pulses, where time duration is measured in millionths of a billionth of a second. Ultrashort pulsed lasers are beginning to be used in a wide range of applications such as ophthalmology, machining and biomedical imaging. "Our instruments provide push-button simplicity and reproducibility to processes that would otherwise be tedious and require a laser expert," explains president Marcos Dantus.

BSI is the only company offering automated ultrafast laser pulse compression, a process that requires careful measurement of phase distortions and introduces a complementary phase that cancels the phase distortions. Other companies offer either pulse measurement or pulse shaping, but BSI is the only one to perfect both functions in one instrument.

BSI developed its first commercial product in 2006 for Coherent, the largest manufacturer of ultrafast lasers, as part of a three-year exclusive license. Then in 2009, BSI launched three new products—two of which have won important industry awards—and began manufacturing in Michigan and selling directly to clients. The new strategy has paid off with annual revenue tripling from 2008 to 2010.



A franchisee and provider of in-home care services, Comfort Keepers helps seniors and other adults maintain an independent lifestyle.

Based in northwest Michigan, the company takes an interactive approach to caregiving, encouraging clients to participate in their own care and maintain connections in their communities. This may include walks in the neighborhood, working together on household chores, discussing current events or personal interests, working on hobbies and crafts, going shopping and attending church.

Comfort Keepers uses Web-based scheduling and telephony systems to monitor caregivers' arrival and departure from assignments and alert office personnel of any change in planned visits in real time. "We communicate with caregivers and clients 24 hours a day through email newsletters, an internal messaging system, text messaging and voice—customizing the method to the preferences of each individual," explains president Leslie Knopp.

Among philanthropic activities, Comfort Keepers has developed Senior Check, a program that identifies seniors who have fallen out of contact with friends, neighbors or relatives and are at risk of physical or mental deterioration. Comfort Keepers caregivers visit these seniors free of charge once a week and provide feedback to the referring agency on the condition and needs of the client.



## Comfort Keepers Traverse City

### At a glance:

Leslie Knopp, president

Founded in 2005

Current leadership since 2005

Primary business: in-home care services

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
53 in 2010 • 66 expected in 2011

[www.comfortkeepers.com/traverse-city-mi](http://www.comfortkeepers.com/traverse-city-mi)



## BS&A Software Bath

### At a glance:

Tom Szur, president

Founded in 1987

Current leadership since 1989

Primary business: computer systems design

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
67 in 2010 • 73 expected in 2011

[www.bsasoftware.com](http://www.bsasoftware.com)

A developer of software for municipalities, BS&A Software helps local and county governments run smoothly. Its applications include everything from property tax and accounting software to cemetery management and building permit software.

Among the company's key products is an Internet services application that allows municipalities to post public property data online. This enables the general public to look up property ownership 24/7—and pay property taxes and utility bills online.

BS&A prides itself on both its superior software and customer service and offers a one-year, risk-reversal pledge on all applications. With more than 1,000 recent installations under its belt, BS&A has never been asked for a refund.

Continually expanding its portfolio of solutions has also fueled BS&A's growth. Case in point: In 2001 the company moved beyond tax and assessment software and released a suite of financial management software. In 2009 it redeveloped all applications to a new platform to maintain the industry standard. "With this we were able to create high-end software without breaking the bank, allowing us to deliver the software to our customers at an affordable price," says president Tom Szur. The new software also positions BS&A for new market opportunities in other states, he adds.



A systems integration and consulting firm, Computerized Facility Integration (CFI) focuses on facility management and corporate real estate. Its solutions are deployed in more than 1 billion square feet of clients' facilities.

With a broad portfolio of services, CFI strives to optimize facilities, lower transaction costs and eliminate expensive and wasteful systems. The company

eliminates redundancies between departments, develops a plan for integrating all technologies, and implements processes that allow clients to focus on core competencies and increase their return on investment.

Playing in a competitive arena, CFI has developed a number of internal tools and processes that leverage real-time information so clients have the right mix of real estate holdings to meet growth and profitability targets.

In 2010 CFI went through a strategic reorganization and identified key areas of accountability for every employee. As a result, the company is achieving greater efficiencies and employees are taking greater ownership in their work. With its new structure in place, CFI expects to increase 2011 revenue by 50 percent from the previous year and plans to add more than 30 employees.



## Computerized Facility Integration LLC Southfield

### At a glance:

Robert Verdun, president

Founded in 1990

Current leadership since 1990

Primary business: information technology

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 2

Full-time equivalent employees:  
91 in 2010 • 127 expected in 2011

[www.gocfi.com](http://www.gocfi.com)



## Cops & Doughnuts Bakery Clare

### At a glance:

Gregory Rynearson, president

Founded in 1896

Current leadership since 2009

Primary business: retail bakery and private label products

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
14 in 2010 • 15 expected in 2011

[www.copsdoughnuts.com](http://www.copsdoughnuts.com)

When it comes to doughnuts, who can smell a success story better than cops? In 2009 nine officers of Clare's police department rescued a historic bakery that was about to close after 113 years, buying the business and renaming it Cops & Doughnuts Bakery.

A few weeks later, the officers purchased a vacant building adjacent to the bakery and opened a retail store, The Cop Shop. The Cop Shop provides additional square footage for seating and sells private-label merchandise, including apparel and coffee mugs with such maxims as "Don't Dunk and Drive" and "DWI—Doughnuts Were Involved" (also available on the company's website).

Continuing expansion efforts, in 2010 Cops & Doughnuts launched its own line of coffee. Sold in grocery and specialty stores in four states, the coffee is available in three varieties: Morning Shift (regular roast), Midnight Shift (dark roast) and Off Duty (decaf).

Although Cops & Doughnuts' owners continue to work full-time on the police force, many help out in the bakery on their days off. "Owning the bakery has strengthened our relationship with our community," says Gregory Rynearson, president. "The community has the opportunity to see their local police in a unique and different light."



## Diversified Industrial Staffing Troy

### At a glance:

Todd Palmer, president

Founded in 1997

Current leadership since 1997

Primary business: staffing services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
7 in 2010 • 9 expected in 2011

[www.diversifiedindustrialstaffing.com](http://www.diversifiedindustrialstaffing.com)

Diversified Industrial Staffing is a national recruiting firm that specializes in manufacturing, construction and logistics jobs, including CNC machine programmers and operators, manual lathe and mill operators, welders, pipe fitters, machine repair personnel, truck drivers, carpenters, painters and drywall repair people.

The company sets itself apart in the market by focusing on middle-market employers and taking a candidate-centric approach. "It's all about the candidate," explains president Todd Palmer. "We present candidates to prospective employers versus asking employers for requirements and job descriptions. We don't take job orders, we create job opportunities."

To do so, Diversified Industrial Staffing leverages technology. By using website spyders, email marketing and industry-specific database management, the company markets talented individuals to specific businesses that are most likely to need those skills—a strategy that can cut down on job-hunting time by more than 50 percent.

Culture is another important component in the company's success. None of its employees have previous recruiting experience; instead, hiring is based on how potential employees fit into corporate culture. In fact, Diversified Industrial Staffing believes so strongly in culture as a value proposition that its entire staff visited Las Vegas-based Zappos in January this year to see first-hand how culture makes a difference.



A biochemical company, Draths Corp. is developing a new technology to manufacture industrial chemicals used by plastics manufacturers.

Sustainability is the company's secret sauce. Instead of starting with petroleum-derived materials, Draths uses fermentable sugars to produce cost-effective, renewable materials used in the production of plastic bottles, carpet fibers and resins. The company

has multiple patents covering its metabolic/synthetic engineering and chemical processing.

Draths' technology will not only reduce the United State's dependency on oil, it also benefits the environment. Because the process is carbon neutral, it reduces the carbon footprint for producing nylon and plastic bottles. In addition, Draths' process will replace the current petrochemical process used for producing plastic, which uses oil-derived materials that are not particularly healthy for the environment.

In September 2010, Draths moved into a new 30,000-square-foot facility in Lansing, which more than doubled its previous space. The new facility features more chemical hoods, expanded synthetic biology laboratory space and an additional fermentor, all of which have led to faster development. It also has space for pilot operations that will be installed in late 2011.

Moving closer to commercialization, Draths has already received funding from two leading manufacturers and users of plastics with other potential funders in the pipeline.



## Draths Corp. Lansing

### At a glance:

Roger Cook and  
Melissa Riordan, co-principals

Founded in 2005

Current leadership since 2010

Primary business: biochemical technology

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.drathscorporation.com](http://www.drathscorporation.com)

## GRAND RIVER

## Grand River Inc. Ann Arbor

### At a glance:

Scott Robertson, president/CEO

Founded in 2007

Current leadership since 2007

Primary business: interactive services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 1

Full-time equivalent employees:  
26 in 2010 • 38 expected in 2011

[www.thegrandriver.com](http://www.thegrandriver.com)



An up-and-comer in the e-commerce arena, Grand River Inc. develops and manages e-commerce websites for retailers, manufacturers and multichannel companies—creating websites that convert shoppers to buyers.

Launched in 2007, the company has been growing quickly: It averaged nearly 200 percent annual revenue growth during the past two years and projects a 56 percent increase for 2011. What's more, Grand River doubled the size of its staff in 2009 and 2010 and looks to add 11 more full-timers this year.

Grand River chalks up its competitive edge partly to the integration and use of open-source e-commerce software, which allows it to lower the cost of entry for mid-market clients by more than 50 percent.

The company introduced a full suite of services (design, information architecture, engineering, integration, email marketing, SEO, affiliate) that enable it to offer clients one-stop support. In addition, Grand River has added e-commerce consultants to help clients define long-term strategy, which has created on-going, retained relationships, says CEO Scott Robertson.

Attesting to its own marketing muscle, Grand River launched an email campaign in 2010 that demonstrated a Flash shopping technology and allowed users to preview and shop online with a full experience. The campaign has led to its largest project to date.



## Great Lakes Stainless, Inc.

Great Lakes Stainless Inc.  
Traverse City

### At a glance:

Terry Berden, president/CEO

Founded in 1995

Current leadership since 1995

Primary business:  
manufactures food service equipment

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
37 in 2010 • 61 expected in 2011

www.callgls.com

Experts in stainless steel fabrication, Great Lakes Stainless Inc. produces everything from food preparation and server equipment to highly custom residential kitchens.

Launched in 1995, the company initially focused on the food service industry, but in 2007 it began to diversify. Today Great Lakes Stainless designs and builds products for hospitals, hotels, schools, airports and commercial businesses.



Innovation is a hallmark at Great Lakes Stainless. For example, in conjunction with a local winery, the company has helped develop a wine distribution cart that uses an eco-friendly box container. The cart keeps wine fresh up to 12 months, eliminating spoilage and breakage, says CEO Terry Berden.

Working with a local inventor, Great Lakes Stainless has developed a patent-pending heat exchange unit for classrooms that replaces hard-to-maintain, inefficient units with streamlined, multitasking technology. The system offers energy savings of up to 50 percent and features an air purification technology that lowered absenteeism by up to 20 percent in Chicago classrooms.

With an eye on future growth, Great Lakes Stainless purchased more than \$940,000 in new equipment in 2009, which has made its processes more efficient. Indeed, the company is forecasting a 91 percent increase in 2011 annual revenue.

An environmental technology broker, HESCO helps communities provide clean drinking water and healthy waterways by specializing in municipal water and wastewater treatment technology, industrial instrumentation and process optimization.



Launched in 1972, the company has evolved from a supplier of products to a supplier of systems-based solutions. HESCO can design and install systems ranging from simple chemical feed systems to complex, full-scale biological treatment processes.

In 2010 HESCO received a U.S. patent for its Integrated Biomass to Energy System (IBES), which will enable it to enter the renewable energy market. With IBES, HESCO solves a major problem in the municipal wastewater treatment industry—namely, the disposal of waste (sludge) that is a byproduct of the water purification process.

The IBES processes sludge into a material that can be used as a fertilizer or soil amendment. What's more, the process generates methane, which is collected and combusted to produce electricity and heat, offsetting the amount of energy that plants purchase from traditional sources.

"Facilities incorporating this technology in their operations can transform their biosolids handling process from a major cost liability to a major asset," says president Kevin Livingston. "Our system not only significantly reduces the energy consumption of the plant but can also create a source of revenue through the sale of fertilizer."



Blending its passion for java and global economic justice, Higher Grounds Trading Co. is Michigan's only 100 percent fair trade and organic coffee roastery. The company also offers a line of 100 percent fair trade and organic olive oil.

Launched in 2002, Higher Grounds opened a retail space within its roastery in 2007. A pivotal decision, the retail space has sparked additional growth, attracting both

new wholesale customers as well as retail customers.

Higher Grounds formed its own nonprofit organization in 2009, which oversees projects to support its coffee-growing partners, such as access to potable water, education and health care. For example, in January 2011 Higher Grounds hosted Run Across Ethiopia, a 410-kilometer marathon across southern Ethiopia that raised more than \$175,000 to build three schools in the country.

In addition to working directly with its coffee growers, Higher Grounds has taken nearly 100 Michigan residents to coffee-growing communities around the world. It also works with both the University of Michigan and Michigan State University to help educate students about socially responsible business practices. "This is a model that we believe to be a holistic approach to business—one where we are looking after all stakeholders in the most sustainable way possible," says owner Chris Treter.



Higher Grounds Trading Co.  
Traverse City

### At a glance:

Chris Treter, owner

Founded in 2002

Current leadership since 2002

Primary business: coffee wholesaler

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
9 in 2010 • 10 expected in 2011

www.highergroundstrading.com



HESCO  
Warren

### At a glance:

Kevin Livingston, president

Founded in 1972

Current leadership since 1997

Primary business:  
water treatment technology

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
10 in 2010 • 11 expected in 2011

www.hesco-mi.com



Named after the Greek goddess of health, Hygieia aims to improve diabetes care. With one patent under its belt and several others pending, the young company has developed a diabetes insulin guidance system (DIGS) that helps users improve their diabetes management and significantly reduce diabetes costs.

Pioneering a new category of medical devices, Hygieia is bridging the gap between diagnostics and therapeutics with a convenient, cost-effective solution that optimizes insulin therapy in between visits to health care providers. Its DIGS device acts like a hand-held physician. A software solution analyzes patients' current and historical blood glucose readings—essentially automating the process physicians go through—and tells diabetics how much insulin to take.

Today, only about one-third of insulin takers are able to successfully manage their disease. Hygieia estimates that its solution would increase this percentage to more than 70 percent, resulting in better health, fewer complications, and reduced diabetes costs without requiring behavioral changes of patients.

Launched in 2008, Hygieia graduated from the Ann Arbor SPARK business incubator in 2010. It expects to introduce its first product this year, which should increase annual revenue fivefold for 2011.



Hygieia Inc.  
Ann Arbor

### At a glance:

Eran Bashan, CEO

Founded in 2008

Current leadership since 2008

Primary business:  
insulin guidance medical devices

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
10 in 2010 • 17 expected in 2011

www.hygieiainc.com



## IMAGE ONE Oak Park

### At a glance:

Rob Dube, president

Founded in 1991

Current leadership since 1991

Primary business: provides printer equipment and maintenance

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 1

Full-time equivalent employees:  
46 in 2010 • 55 expected in 2011

[www.imageoneway.com](http://www.imageoneway.com)

A provider of printer equipment and maintenance, IMAGE ONE strives to help clients decrease costs while improving their productivity and simplifying their printing environment.

Precocious entrepreneurs, co-owners Rob Dube and Joel Pearlman learned an important lesson during ninth grade when selling Blow Pops out of their lockers to classmates: Consistent, reliable service and high-quality products result in customer loyalty.

Fast forward to 2011: IMAGE ONE boasts a 98 percent customer-retention rate and has been able to achieve solid growth despite the recent recession.

In its quest to exceed clients' expectations, technology is an important tool. IMAGE ONE implements software that monitors customers' print environments so it can respond proactively to their needs. "Issues are taken care of before they ever realize there is an issue," says president Rob Dube.

What's more, the company's technology alerts clients when they are about to print a job that may be costly and gives suggestions on printing in a more cost-effective manner. A total amount saved on each print job shows on their screen along with the total of savings since implementation.

Gratitude and giving back are also key corporate values for IMAGE ONE. Among other philanthropic efforts, the company is trying to raise \$1 million for autism.



## Innovative Analytics Kalamazoo

### At a glance:

James Dancy, co-founder

Founded in 2003

Current leadership since 2003

Primary business:  
scientific consulting services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
24 in 2010 • 27 expected in 2011

[www.ianalytics.biz](http://www.ianalytics.biz)

As a contract research organization, Innovative Analytics provides data analysis, management, data reporting and medical writing services to developers of pharmaceutical drugs and medical devices.

Sparked by restructuring after Pfizer acquired Pharmacia in 2002, Innovative Analytics' founders refused to be victims of corporate downsizing. Rejecting job offers that would have required them to relocate outside of Michigan, they sought funding from the Michigan Economic Development Corp., which helped them launch Innovative Analytics in 2003.

The company supports clinical trial analysis in all three phases of drug (or device) development:

- 1) Evaluating the safety and bioavailability of a drug.
- 2) Supporting the analysis to determine optimal dosing in patients and the associated safety profile of a drug.
- 3) Analyzing large amounts of patient data to determine overall safety and efficacy of a drug or device to submit for regulatory authority approval. (Here, the company's medical and statistical writing expertise is especially valuable to clients.)

"Our strength is our people, whose industry reputation has earned us the chance to compete with much larger and more established contract research firms," says co-founder James Dancy. To sustain that competitive edge, the company stresses ongoing training to ensure its staff remains on the forefront of the latest drug development trends.



Achieving measurable results is the "M.O." of Integrated Strategies Inc., a consulting firm that focuses on supply chain, strategic sourcing, logistics and warehousing.

The company seeks to improve operations and relationships for clients, their internal and external customers, and suppliers. Any product consumed or service performed is viewed as a potential improvement opportunity, says CEO Steven Trecha.

Integrated Strategies creates double-digit value for its clients by reducing their costs and improving asset utilization, efficiency and employee job enrichment. Then the company transfers knowledge, tools and content to clients so they can sustain the improvements. "The idea is to teach clients to fish," says Trecha.

Integrated Strategies has developed a number of proprietary tools including:

- A supply-chain tool to develop the lowest cost strategies for critical commodities.
- Client-management websites that give senior managers 24/7 visibility into programs, plans and results for every initiative.
- A Web-enabled, personal planning tool that helps team members manage action items and deliverables—and achieve better balance between their personal and professional lives.

The company has received a number of awards over the years, including the 2002 Michigan Quality Leadership Navigator Recognition from the Michigan Quality Council, which is the state's equivalent of the Malcolm Baldrige Award.

## Integrated STRATEGIES

## Integrated Strategies Inc. Okemos

### At a glance:

Steven Trecha, president/CEO

Founded in 1990

Current leadership since 1990

Primary business: supply chain consulting

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 1

[www.sourcing.com](http://www.sourcing.com)



## Intervention Insights LLC Grand Rapids

### At a glance:

Jerry Callahan, launch CEO

Founded in 2009

Current leadership since 2009

Primary business:  
medical information services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.interventioninsights.com](http://www.interventioninsights.com)



With its medical information services, Intervention Insights is helping oncologists develop more personalized treatment strategies for cancer patients.

"Just as each person has a unique set of fingerprints, each individual's cancer has its own molecular profile, which responds differently to treatments," says Jerry Callahan, Intervention Insights' launch CEO. For several decades, the pharmaceutical industry has

focused on developing molecularly targeted therapies to disrupt the underlying causes of cancer, he explains. Yet treating physicians often have no insights into their patients' unique genomic profile.

Enter Intervention Insights. The company's OncInsights service uses a bioinformatics platform, initially developed at the Van Andel Institute, that interrogates more than 54,000 molecular data points for each patient and develops a complete genomic profile of their disease. OncInsights then screens more than 300 molecularly targeted drugs against each patient's tumor profile—and performs a real-time search of scientific and clinical knowledge to align supporting evidence for identified drugs.

Although other services generate molecular data on patients' tumor tissues, competitors typically limit investigations to fewer than 50 genes and also limit the number of drugs reviewed. In addition to providing more extensive information, Intervention Insights further strengthens its competitive advantage by delivering findings to physicians in an interactive report.

# kantorwassink

Kantorwassink  
Grand Rapids

## At a glance:

Wendy Wassink, owner

Founded in 2005

Current leadership since 2005

Primary business:  
advertising and public relations

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
9 in 2010 • 10 expected in 2011

www.kantorwassink.com

An advertising and public relations firm, Kantorwassink infuses brands with personality.

The company prides itself on breakthrough creativity and strategy, whether it's developing a business-to-business promotion or executing a product placement. For example:

- Creating branding for Nutrilite that included an endorsement campaign filmed by Academy-award-winning cinematographer, Guillermo Navarro, which starred the renowned Brazilian footballer Ronaldinho.
  - Developing a “no-nonsense, gritty” brand personality for Ferris State University that increased enrollment by 3 percent in just six months.
  - Unleashing a veritable army of Segways in shopping malls at Christmas on behalf of Helen DeVos Children's Hospital with vehicle operators dispensing packages of hand sanitizer by the thousands.
- Attesting to the kind of over-the-top results it strives to deliver, Kantorwassink has installed a Vegas-style flashing sign on its agency that says “Wow”—with no agency name or other company information visible.
- In addition to turning itself upside down for clients, Kantorwassink believes in investing in its community. The company supports many local nonprofit organizations, both financially and with in-kind creative services. It has also purchased and transformed two abandoned industrial properties and is currently renovating a third. “To our pleasure, and to the delight of the city, we're seeing a ‘reuse ripple effect’ with surrounding properties,” says owner Wendy Wassink.



Specializing in design, precision metal cutting and fabrication, Lakeshore Cutting Solutions (LCS) has quickly built a solid clientele in a crowded arena. It's honed a competitive edge via quick turnaround, high-quality, competitive pricing—and diverse services that enable it to act as a one-stop shop for clients.

Investing in new equipment and technology has also contributed to the company's success. For example, in 2007 LCS added a 2,600-watt laser and 8-foot press brake, along with a fabrication department.

Its engineering department uses SolidWorks, a software program with endless design capabilities including 3-D modeling. What's more, LCS is implementing E2 manufacturing software that will provide up-to-the minute data for all jobs and greater accuracy in scheduling while enabling transparency for clients. “When E2 is running 100 percent, the goal is to allow customers to log into our system and see where their jobs are at any point in time,” says president Justin Ayers.

Preparing for future growth, in November 2010 LCS moved into a new 23,000-square-foot building, which has increased efficiency and organization. The company achieved a 24 percent increase in 2010 annual revenue and projects a 25 percent increase for this year.



Lakeshore Cutting Solutions  
Zeeland

## At a glance:

Justin Ayers, president

Founded in 2006

Current leadership since 2006

Primary business:  
metal cutting and fabrication

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
13 in 2010 • 17 expected in 2011

www.cuttingsolutionsinc.com



L'Anse Manufacturing Inc.  
L'Anse

## At a glance:

Mark Massicotte, president

Founded in 2007

Current leadership since 2007

Primary business: machining and  
prototype services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
17 in 2010 • 23 expected in 2011

www.lansemfg.com

Based in the Upper Peninsula, L'Anse Manufacturing Inc. (LMI) provides precision machining and prototyping services to a variety of specialty markets. Its metal and plastic components are used in aerospace, medical equipment, orthopedic, light industrial and high-performance applications.

The company launched in 1975, but changed ownership in January 2007 under the leadership of Mark Massicotte and Wallace “Buddy” Sweeney. Immediately after purchasing the company, the new owners sought ISO 9001 quality certification, followed by AS9100 certification in 2010, which helped LMI enter new markets. Today the company boasts a 99.8 percent quality rate and 98.8 percent on-time delivery rate.

By leveraging computer technologies, LMI can quickly and cost-effectively manufacture a single prototype or production run of several thousand parts—flexibility that its clients value. Agility is another hallmark. Case in point, when helping a medical equipment company launch a new product, LMI was the only vendor able to keep pace with multiple design changes and meet its original time commitment based on the first design iteration.

“Our ability to listen to our customer requirements, collaborate with them and leverage appropriate technology is the competitive advantage that drives new and repeat business at L'Anse,” says president Mark Massicotte.



A custom manufacturer of high-fidelity speakers, Leon Speakers was the first audio company to focus on flat-panel video displays.

Leon's early innovations include the on-wall plasma speaker and the “soundbar” (a single speaker cabinet that houses left, center and right channels of audio), which it launched in 1998 and 2003 respectively. Winning numerous industry awards, these early products opened the doors to some of

the most important retailers in the country.

In 2007 Leon opened new distribution channels by winning a contract to outfit more than 80 luxury residences in the New York Plaza Hotel with high-fidelity audio. Since then, the company has done installations in the Las Vegas Hard Rock Hotel, Caesars Palace and The Cosmopolitan.

To better manage its custom-order process, Leon adopted a cloud-based system in 2010, which allows dealers and their clients to share product development insights. The system has also led to new partnerships, reports president Noah Kaplan. For example, Leon has secured global projects to provide speakers with built-in HD cameras for videoconferencing suites.

Demonstrating its ongoing flair for mixing art with audio, Leon's staff created a 16-foot long, 3,000-watt sound, dragon-shaped sculpture for the 2010 CEDIA Expo—a display that generated considerable buzz during the industry trade show.



Leon Speakers Inc.  
Ann Arbor

## At a glance:

Noah Kaplan, president/co-founder

Founded in 1997

Current leadership since 1997

Primary business:  
manufactures audio speakers

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
24 in 2010 • 30 expected in 2011

www.leonspeakers.com

## Livio® Radio

More Music, Less Work.

Livio Radio  
Ferndale

### At a glance:

Jake Sigal, founder/CEO

Founded in 2008

Current leadership since 2008

Primary business: manufactures  
Internet radio devices

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
14 in 2010 • 17 expected in 2011

www.livioradio.com

More music, less work is Livio Radio's mantra. A rising star in the consumer electronics arena, the company makes electronic devices that enable people to access Internet radio without a computer or phone.

For example, the company's Pandora radio works anywhere individuals have access to Wi-Fi or Ethernet. Users can access their personal Pandora account on the radio, which is the first device to offer Pandora's signature thumbs-up, thumbs-down controls on the front panel. Livio's NPR radio allows users to quickly search and bookmark their favorite NPR programming. Both radios can be set up in minutes, require no subscription or monthly fees and offer free access to more than 20,000 Internet radio stations around the world.

Founder Jake Sigal, a third-generation entrepreneur, launched the company in 2008 as Myine Electronics with a focus on designing products that operate quickly without complicated menus. In 2010 the company rebranded in 2010 as Livio (a merger of the words "living room" and "radio").

Livio's most recent innovation—and its first step into vehicle technology—is a patent-pending FM transmitter. Known as the Carmen, the device features AUX, MP3 storage and Internet radio recording capabilities, selling for a fraction of the price of competing products.



MacUpdate  
Traverse City

### At a glance:

Joel Mueller, founder

Founded in 1996

Current leadership since 1996

Primary business: computer software sales

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
8 in 2010 • 9 expected in 2011

www.macupdate.com

An apple a day simply isn't enough for MacUpdate, which helps users of Mac computers and iPhones find new software and updates. The company's website attracts more than 5 million unique visitors per month, making it the second most popular Mac-only software website (with only Apple.com ranking ahead of it).

MacUpdate's strong revenue growth has earned it a spot on the Inc. 500 list for three years in a row (including a ranking among Michigan firms of No. 1 in 2009 and No. 5 in 2010).

Scalability is a major ingredient in the company's recipe for success, resulting in extremely high revenue-per-employee numbers.

Launched in 1996, MacUpdate initially generated revenue by selling advertising and developing and selling its own software subscriptions. But in 2007 it began to focus selling other people's software—automating the entire purchase and distribution process. The payoff: during the past three years MacUpdate has averaged a 66 percent increase in annual revenue, and it expects to achieve another double-digit gain this year.

Founder Joel Mueller likens MacUpdate to Facebook, albeit from a high-end perspective. "MacUpdate is a community," he explains. "It brings the brightest Mac user minds together and gives them a platform to communicate." The website also brings the developers of Mac applications together, giving them an outlet to promote and sell their software, he adds.



A real estate company that specializes in new residential construction, Marketplace Homes sets itself apart with a unique leasing program.

If a client buys a home through one of its partner builders, Marketplace Homes guarantees to lease the client's old residence for up to six years. Homeowners will receive a monthly payment—whether or not a tenant can be found. In addition,

Marketplace Homes handles utilities, maintenance and repairs at the old home.

Launched in 2002, Marketplace Homes underwent a major restructuring in 2009 when Mike Kalis purchased the company. Since then, growth has been impressive with average annual revenue increases of 191 percent during the past two years. For 2011, the company projects another triple-digit increase in revenue and expects to more than double its staff.

In addition to its guaranteed lease program, Marketplace has sparked growth with a "cloud real estate" concept—selling homes across the nation via the Internet and teleconferencing. The company added 13 new markets in the past six months and hopes to be in 36 markets by the end of 2011.

The cloud concept enables Marketplace to provide faster, higher-quality service, says Kalis. "Our solutions specialists handle everything over the phone in a very streamlined process that is much more efficient than the standard broker/agent relationship."



Marketplace Homes  
Plymouth

### At a glance:

Mike Kalis, managing partner

Founded in 2002

Current leadership since 2009

Primary business:  
residential real estate sales

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
21 in 2010 • 51 expected in 2011

www.marketplacehomes.com



Maximum Mold specializes in die casts, plastic injection molds, contract machining and fixtures.

To stand out in a competitive market, the tool and die shop continually invests in faster equipment and new technology. For example, 3-D modeling capabilities ensure that Maximum Mold meets specifications on customers' parts. Reverse engineering enables it to rebuild tools or molds from

older parts in cases where an original equipment manufacturer may be out of business but the part is still working for a client.

Maximum Mold also competes by participating in a tooling coalition, which allows it to access machinery and equipment without capital outlay. Each coalition participant has a niche, and Maximum Mold can subcontract work to others through workload balancing. The coalition enables participants to network and sustain a skilled workforce by keeping employees busy during slower times.

In 2010 Maximum Mold purchased a new facility in Benton Harbor and additional equipment, which tripled its size and has enabled the company to work more efficiently, obtain larger projects and provide employees with a better working environment, says president David LaGrow. As a result, revenue nearly tripled in 2010 from the previous year, and the company projects a 24 percent increase for 2011.



Maximum Mold  
Benton Harbor

### At a glance:

David LaGrow, president

Founded in 1996

Current leadership since 1996

Primary business: manufactures prototype  
and product molds

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
16 in 2010 • 19 expected in 2011

www.maximummold.com



## MessageMakers

MessageMakers  
Lansing

*At a glance:*

Terry Terry, president

Founded in 1977

Current leadership since 1977

Primary business: information media

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 1

[www.messagemakers.com](http://www.messagemakers.com)

A producer of events, videos and learning programs, MessageMakers sets itself apart from competitors by offering a combination of services under one roof. Its staff is intent on helping clients tell their stories—and achieve measurable results, whether that translates into extremely high satisfaction ratings for training programs or increases in fund-raising revenue.



Innovation is a priority at MessageMakers, the first Lansing company to offer independent video editing services and acquire high-definition video cameras. MessageMakers was also an early adopter of Web-based management and cloud-computing technologies, allowing it to collaborate on projects worldwide.

Among the company's intellectual property, MessageMakers has developed a new method for providing audio descriptions of bus routes, which helps visually impaired people use public transit. Initially used by Lansing's Capital Area Transportation Authority, the system has been adopted by the Detroit Department of Transportation, Metro Detroit-area SMART and Grand Rapids' The Rapid.

Since 1999 alone, MessageMakers has won more than 50 industry and community awards. Among these, Terry Terry was named the 2011 Greater Lansing Catalyst for Change in recognition of his work to transform Lansing's Old Town historic district into a regional arts center.



MFP Inc.  
Grandville

*At a glance:*

David Grimm, president

Founded in 1991

Current leadership since 2005

Primary business: manufactures fluid power systems

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
50 in 2010 • 51 expected in 2011

[www.mifp.com](http://www.mifp.com)

MFP Inc. distributes and manufactures fluid power, automation and motion control equipment.

In contrast to many competitors, MFP has on-site engineering capabilities and a field service team, which enable it to design and build systems and offer in-plant repairs to customers.

Setting internal metrics—and being diligent about attaining them—has also fueled MFP's success and helped it exceed customers' expectations.

Innovation has been part of MFP's culture from the get-go. When the company launched in 1991, hydraulic and automation manufacturers were building the same type of overhead power supply systems. MFP set a new industry standard by designing a vertical unit for the pump and containing potential leak points inside the reservoir. This created a more compact, cleaner, quieter system for customers to maintain and operate. MFP has also engineered a design for manifold circuits that makes it possible to add more components to a system, without adding extra hoses and valves and avoid potential leak points.

"Our focus on innovation has led us to some direct patents on our custom designs, but we primarily help customers hone a particular part of their machine process to create their individual technology using our expertise," says president David Grimm.



Playing in the competitive software design arena, Mutually Human Software specializes in mobile and Web-based products and services. The company

has demonstrated rapid growth, with annual revenue increases averaging 60 percent over the past three years and a 67 percent increase projected for 2011.

Originating as a consultancy, in 2010 Mutually Human began to transition into a product company. In 2011 it plans to launch two applications:

- Inspire, a contact management tool to help churches and nonprofit organizations manage their contacts and donations.
- Syncr, an affordable tool for small businesses to sync their data (invoices, payroll, client information, etc.) across many different applications and control that data effectively.

In addition to its focus on mobile and Web technologies, Mutually Human stands apart from competitors by embracing an approach to software development that combines agile and lean practices with UX methodologies.

"The integration of UX and agile practices is an emerging field of development that really focuses on open communication and multiple iterations of work passing between the stakeholders, designers and developers," says CEO John Hwang. "The result is a truly shared goal and shared success."

One of the few insurance brokerages to operate exclusively online, My Insurance Expert (MIE) launched in 2006, representing top-rated carriers around the country.

MIE takes a "client for life" mentality to customer service, says CEO Lorne Zalesin. With that in mind, MIE has developed proprietary customer relationship management software that helps it maintain a competitive edge.

MIE's growth has been impressive. From 2008 to 2010, its annual revenue increased fivefold. The company projects an 80 percent increase for 2011 revenue and expects to more than triple its staff.

Responding to the national health care legislation, in July 2010 MIE shifted its focus from health insurance to life insurance. Within a six-month period MIE became one of the top 15 middle-market life insurance agencies in the country and aims to be in the top five by the end of 2011.

Giving back to its local community is a priority for MIE. In the past year it participated in a local build with Habitat for Humanity and supported numerous other charities. It also raised more than \$12,000 to send underprivileged children to camp for the summer by throwing a rock concert in partnership with the Bear Hug Foundation.



My Insurance Expert  
Troy

*At a glance:*

Lorne Zalesin, CEO

Founded in 2006

Current leadership since 2006

Primary business: insurance brokerage

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
63 in 2010 • 213 expected in 2011

[www.myinsuranceexpert.com](http://www.myinsuranceexpert.com)



Mutually Human Software  
Grand Rapids

*At a glance:*

John Hwang, CEO

Founded in 2006

Current leadership since 2006

Primary business:  
computer systems design

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
10 in 2010 • 13 expected in 2011

[www.mutuallyhuman.com](http://www.mutuallyhuman.com)





## New Age/Landmark Inc. South Haven

### At a glance:

Scott Wall, president/principal

Founded in 1998

Current leadership since 1998

Primary business:  
environmental testing services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
13 in 2010 • 16 expected in 2011

[www.newagelandmark.com](http://www.newagelandmark.com)

New Age/Landmark Inc. (NAL) provides on-site capabilities to analyze air, water, soil, and soil gas samples. It has performed testing at commercial facilities around the country as well as at Department of Defense and Environmental Protection Agency Superfund sites.

In 2000 the company won certification from the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP)—the first provider of mobile laboratory services to do so.

Another milestone, in 2007 NAL established a construction arm to produce and export the kind of analytical mobile field laboratories that it uses domestically. The company has exported its first international field lab to a Libyan-owned oil firm and issued quotations and design specs to government agencies in North Africa, the Middle East, Australia, South America and the Balkans.

On the homefront, NAL is flexing its analytical muscle and expanding beyond environmental testing to offer:

- Agricultural testing to provide cost-effective laboratory services to farmers.
- Food quality and biofuel testing.
- A consulting division focused on sustainable community design and reclamation.

“These developments will provide in-state support to rural communities and towns as they address ever-changing global markets, food safety concerns and 21st century issues concerning growth and development,” says president Scott Wall.



## NOVO Motor Acoustic Systems Warren

### At a glance:

Tim Droege, president

Founded in 2000

Current leadership since 2009

Primary business:  
manufactures vehicle components

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
61 in 2010 • 75 expected in 2011

[www.novo-mas.com](http://www.novo-mas.com)

Silence is golden for NOVO Motor Acoustic Systems. A leader in vehicle refinement, the company supplies NVH (noise, vibration and harshness) systems and solutions to automotive manufacturers.

This is becoming an increasingly important niche as the automotive industry turns to smaller displacement engines (such as four-cylinder turbo-charged, direct inject, hybrid, and diesel) to meet new federal fuel-economy standards. Although lowering fuel consumption, the smaller engines present a new problem: They're really loud. Stepping up to the plate, NOVO's patented wide-band resonators and plastic mufflers help quiet vehicles, while improving fuel economy and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

In contrast to competitors that focus either on manufacturing or engineering services, NOVO offers expertise in both areas. “This allows us to act as a true full-service supplier and actually help our customers solve NVH problems,” says president Tim Droege. “We can do the testing and manufacture the parts all under one roof, saving our customers both time and money.”

Having the right products at the right time is paying off nicely for NOVO. From 2008 to 2010 the company increased annual revenue by 63 percent. This year's forecast is even brighter, as NOVO expects to more than double annual revenue and create 14 new jobs.



Plascon Group is comprised of several companies that manufacture specialty plastic packaging for the food service, institutional, pharmaceutical and bulk packaging industries.

Strategic partnerships have been key in Plascon's success. For example, it's the only company in North America that can produce bags for Niverplast's patented system (sold internationally, this system lines boxes with bags and is used for packaging frozen poultry and other foodservice applications).

Additionally, Plascon is the only company that can produce bags from Cryovac's state-of-the-art multilayered film developed specifically for the cook-chill process.

Investing in facilities and equipment has also helped fuel growth. For example, Plascon recently added 18,000 square feet to its Traverse City facility. This has improved process flow by creating dedicated warehouse space and enabled the company to double its capacity for blown film.

Technical innovation helps Plascon retain its competitive edge.

Engineers in the company's Plasport division often build equipment from the ground up to create the unique products that customers demand, points out CEO David Peterson.

Launched in 2006, the Plasport division works closely with pharmaceutical companies to provide packaging that simplifies testing of new pharmaceutical products. The division operates a Class 10,000 clean room where its bioprocessing bags are manufactured to extremely tight tolerances.



A designer and manufacturer of light-emitting diode (LED) solutions, Relume Technologies is illuminating the country's roadways, parking lots, structures and billboards.

Innovation could be Relume's middle name. The company currently holds 10 patents relating to LED lighting and thermal management with more than a dozen additional patents pending.

The largest manufacturer of LED lighting products in Michigan, Relume's proprietary Silver Circuitry technology addresses several major obstacles associated with LED lighting, such as controlling heat. Using its thermal management techniques, Relume is able to lower the operating temperature of LEDs while improving brightness and duration. In a nutshell, Relume's products run cooler, burn brighter, last longer and cost less.

Among its portfolio of LED solutions, Relume has a patent-pending system that allows municipalities to network their street and roadway lights and control them wirelessly—enhancing safety while reducing energy consumption, maintenance costs and carbon dioxide generation.

Because the system operates across existing public-safety radio frequency bands, municipalities don't have to add expensive infrastructure or incur monthly data charges. “Government units can now remotely program, dim and monitor their street lighting installations at nominal cost,” says COO Michael McClear.



## Plascon

PACKAGING | EQUIPMENT | EXPERTISE

## Plascon Group Traverse City

### At a glance:

David Peterson, CEO

Founded in 2000

Current leadership since 2000

Primary business:  
manufactures plastic packaging

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
48 in 2010 • 50 expected in 2011

[www.plascongroup.com](http://www.plascongroup.com)



## Relume Technologies Inc. Oxford

### At a glance:

Michael McClear, COO

Founded in 1994

Current leadership since 2001

Primary business:  
manufactures LED lighting

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 3

Full-time equivalent employees:  
41 in 2010 • 91 expected in 2011

[www.relume.com](http://www.relume.com)





## Running Fit Inc. Ann Arbor

### At a glance:

Randy Step, president

Founded in 1985

Current leadership since 1985

Primary business: running gear retailer  
and events producer

Sites in Michigan: 7 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
59 in 2010 • 67 expected in 2011

[www.runningfit.com](http://www.runningfit.com)

Running Fit Inc. keeps extending its stride, achieving steady double-digit growth despite the recent recession.

Owned and staffed by passionate runners, Running Fit launched in 1985 as a specialty retail store. In 1987 the company began to diversify into the events business with a trail marathon. Today it produces 23 events, including three triathlons and seven marathons.

In 1990 the company introduced a trail training class and now offers multiple classes for beginning, intermediate and advanced runners. In 2005 Running Fit expanded again, entering the race-timing business. This year it expects to time the finish of more than 50,000 runners.

Technology has helped Running Fit increase its market profile, points out president Randy Step. The company has maintained an Internet presence since 1996 and was an early adopter of social media marketing. It currently maintains more than 30 websites, six Facebook pages, a Twitter page and multiple blogs. Running Fit has also developed an online registration system for its running events and classes, which it offers to race-timing customers.

Each event that Running Fit produces has a charitable component, such as fighting childhood obesity or abuse to women. In recognition of its community service, Running Fit won the 2008 Ubuntu Award, a prestigious industry award.



## Sakti3 Ann Arbor

### At a glance:

Ann Marie Sastry, CEO

Founded in 2007

Current leadership since 2007

Primary business:  
manufactures batteries

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.sakti3.com](http://www.sakti3.com)

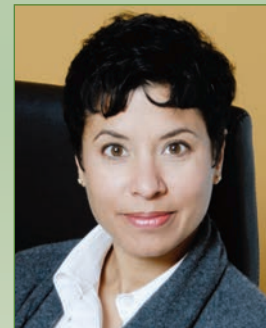
Better batteries is Sakti3's mission. Spun out of technology developed at the University of Michigan, the company is commercializing next-generation batteries for vehicles and electrical devices.

Sakti3's advanced, solid-state energy storage devices will improve energy and power density, safety, and lifetime of battery cells. Bottom line, consumers will be able to drive electric vehicles farther and use electronic devices longer.

In contrast to the wet-slurry process used to make existing lithium ion batteries, Sakti3's secret sauce revolves around a novel, disruptive manufacturing process. The company has several patents pending that protect this process and product design.

Sakti3 further sets itself apart from competitors with advanced simulation capabilities, which allow it to design and test products in virtual reality prior to fabrication. This reduces the "trial-and-error" approach that is currently commonplace in the industry. "It hastens the development time required to achieve an optimized product, while eliminating many of the largest R&D expenses that are typically encountered in this type of product development," explains CEO Ann Marie Sastry.

In addition to receiving a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corp. and being named as a Center of Energy Excellence, Sakti3 has also received funding from Khosla Ventures, Beringea, GM Ventures and Itochu Corp.



Shelving Inc. (SI) helps consumers, businesses and government agencies get more mileage out of their space.

The company sets itself apart from competitors by offering not only shelving and storage equipment, but also excelling in storage design and layout. "We don't just sell products, we provide solutions," says CEO Joseph Schodowski.

Founded in 1960, SI has achieved growth during the last decade by opening two e-commerce stores: [www.shelving.com](http://www.shelving.com), which targets businesses, and [www.theshelvingstore.com](http://www.theshelvingstore.com), which targets consumers. The websites have enabled SI to attract new customers throughout the United States and Canada.

The company has also leveraged technology with a virtual private network (VPN) that enables employees at its Auburn Hills and Madison Heights locations to communicate better. The VPN allows both facilities to know each other's real-time inventory as well as shipping and customer service information for every order, which results in faster response to customer needs and inquiries.

In addition to improving its internal infrastructure, SI believes in investing in its community. It has won the Auburn Hills Beautification Award on eight occasions. Among other philanthropic activities, SI established "Benefit on the Bay" in 1994, a charitable event that has helped raise nearly \$1 million for Detroit's Capuchin Soup Kitchen.



## Shelving Inc. Auburn Hills

### At a glance:

Joseph Schodowski, president/CEO

Founded in 1960

Current leadership since 2000

Primary business:  
provides storage products

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
21 in 2010 • 23 expected in 2011

[www.shelving.com](http://www.shelving.com)



Long on innovation, Shorts Brewing Co. is pushing the boundaries on beer. The company has won a number of industry awards for its unique brews and ranks among the country's top breweries.

Shorts is also one of the fastest growing breweries, achieving an average annual revenue increase of 66 percent over the past three years. Growth has been fueled by such exotic products as its Bloody Mary Beer, Key Lime Pie, PB&J Stout and Black Licorice Lager, which have increased awareness for the company and helped drive demand for its regular labels.

The company has been able to generate considerable public relations due to the scarcity of its products as well as their uniqueness, with many brews available for only a week.

Experimental brewing tests the limits of what can go into a beer and taste good without affecting product stability. No easy feat, says CEO Leah Short: "In order to add these ingredients, new methods of brewing have had to be devised and often custom equipment made."

Devoted to its community, Shorts has transformed two empty buildings into viable commercial facilities. These buildings double as a community center, hosting a number of events, including a dance class, knitting club and spirituality group.



## Shorts Brewing Co. Bellaire

### At a glance:

Leah Short, CEO

Founded in 2003

Current leadership since 2003

Primary business: manufactures craft beer

Sites in Michigan: 3 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
28 in 2010 • 36 expected in 2011

[www.shortsbrewing.com](http://www.shortsbrewing.com)



## SRT Solutions Ann Arbor

### At a glance:

Dianne Marsh and Bill Wagner, co-owners

Founded in 1999

Current leadership since 1999

Primary business:  
computer systems design

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.srtsolutions.com](http://www.srtsolutions.com)

A custom software developer, SRT Solutions writes software for enterprise systems, specialized machines, embedded products, mobile devices and Web platforms.

SRT creates solutions that help clients maintain their competitive positions—or overcome market leaders. Projects range from a flexible ordering system for a consumer product to a testing system that shortens an engineering product's development cycle from months to hours. SRT also works with its clients' software developers on-site, teaching them how to apply new technologies. The company has achieved strong growth despite a difficult economic climate, averaging annual revenue increases of 35 percent over the past three years.

To keep its innovative edge sharp, SRT is committed to continual learning—and strengthening the software ecosystem. It hosts six monthly user groups, so developers can share ideas and expertise, and it participates in other user groups. SRT's staff contributes numerous articles to key trade publications, and co-founder Bill Wagner has written three books on the C# software language.

SRT has also contributed two open-source projects to the community, and is a driving force behind CodeMash, a software conference it helped develop in 2005. CodeMash has grown to 800 attendees and become the largest software conference in the Midwest.



## Translume Inc. Ann Arbor

### At a glance:

Philippe Bado, president

Founded in 2001

Current leadership since 2001

Primary business:  
glass micromachining

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.translume.com](http://www.translume.com)

A leader in glass micromachining, Translume fabricates microfluidic chips, flow cells and fluid condition monitoring instruments. The company has obtained several U.S. patents on its laser writing technology, optical devices and fluid condition monitoring systems.

Translume launched in 2001 after successfully demonstrating its ability to write patterns embedded in glass, using an ultrafast laser. In 2007 funding from the Michigan 21st Century Jobs Fund allowed the company to take its FemtoWrite technology to the next level. The following year it launched a line of microfluidic chips and flow cells, which are now used by biomedical and industrial instrument manufacturers around the globe.

Translume's proprietary technology enables it to introduce small refractive index changes, without ablation, at precise locations in glass blocks. When combined with proprietary painting and trimming techniques, Translume creates complex 3-D waveguides that can conduct light within the block. In addition, by applying its etching techniques, Translume can fabricate fluid-conducting microchannels in the glass block.

"In this manner, micro-optic and microfluidic capabilities can be integrated into a single monolithic structure," says president Philippe Bado. "Translume is the only company in the world with these unique capabilities."



"Working with us is contagious" is TransPharm's motto. A rising star in the CRO (contract research organization) industry, TransPharm sets itself apart by focusing exclusively on infectious diseases.

Launched in 2007, TransPharm achieved an average annual revenue increase of 199 percent during the past two years and projects another hefty increase (196 percent) for 2011.

More than 90 percent of its revenue comes from clients outside of Michigan, and half of those are located overseas.

In 2009 TransPharm won full accreditation from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, an important milestone for a research facility working with animals. The elite award is held by less than 800 research institutions around the world.

In contrast to competitors, TransPharm offers custom designs for clients. "Most of our clients don't need the same work done twice in a row, so each experiment we run is tailored to the goals of the client for that study," says CEO Daniel Ross. "We've been told that we are the only company offering options other than the 'off-the-shelf' experiment."

The company also demonstrates its creative prowess by bringing new animal models to the industry, one of which is expected to be highlighted at this year's Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy in Chicago.



## TransPharm Preclinical Solutions Jackson

### At a glance:

Daniel Ross, president/CEO

Founded in 2007

Current leadership since 2007

Primary business: scientific R&D services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
6 in 2010 • 9 expected in 2011

[www.transpharmsite.com](http://www.transpharmsite.com)

A contract filler and packaging company, Tri-Pac offers a broad portfolio of services that includes product development, sourcing of raw and packaging materials, blending, filling and quality assurance.

"We have state-of-the-art manufacturing operations and can offer customers complete turnkey service for their products," says president Vikram Shah.

Indeed, Tri-Pac's formulation capabilities include cold and hot blending of chemical ingredients to produce products that range from automotive fuel additives to gun lubricants to industrial cleaners to furniture polish. The company's automatic fill line is capable of high-speed filling of plastic and glass bottles ranging from two ounces to one gallon, and its explosion-proof equipment allows safe handling of flammable-, petroleum- and emulsion-based products. What's more, Tri-Pac has added piston aerosol filling capabilities, enabling it to expand into caulking products.

The company has a penchant for problem-solving. For example, a customer approached Tri-Pac with a product that had an unstable formulation that grew yeast and mold within two weeks of manufacturing. Tri-Pac set up an in-house microbial testing lab and was able to alter the formulation while retaining its main properties—successfully extending the product's shelf life to at least four to six months.



## Tri-Pac Inc. Vandalia

### At a glance:

Vikram Shah, president

Founded in 2009

Current leadership since 2009

Primary business: manufactures and  
packages consumer products

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
24 in 2010 • 33 expected in 2011

[www.tri-pac.us](http://www.tri-pac.us)



Tri-Star Molding Inc.  
Marcellus

### At a glance:

Nicholas DeKoning, president

Founded in 1996

Current leadership since 1996

Primary business: manufactures plastic injection molded parts

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
38 in 2010 • 40 expected in 2011

www.tristarmolding.com

Manufacturing plastic injection molded parts and over-molded parts (plastic over metal), Tri-Star Molding Inc. serves a wide variety of industries. The company's products run the gamut from durable mechanisms used inside recliner chairs to high-tolerance components used inside pneumatic valves.



A reputation for being nimble and delivering superior customer service has enabled Tri-Star to attract customers away from large main-line molding shops.

Plastic resins and production processes can be temperamental, explains president Nicholas DeKoning: "In addition, customers often encounter scheduling errors and need product immediately. When issues like this arise, we unhesitantly step up to the plate and do what has to be done, whether it's working through the night to troubleshoot problems or jumping on a plane with product in tow to keep an assembly line from idling."

Tri-Star also has built a reputation for innovation. Case in point, it helped customers devise a way to reconnect broken mandrels inside of hydraulic hoses so they could be reused. Tri-Star was then authorized to purchase vertical molding presses on behalf of three major hydraulic hose manufacturers and train their personnel how to use the presses, employing the techniques that Tri-Star pioneered. This ultimately reduced the manufacturers' costs and increased efficiencies.



Underground Printing  
Ann Arbor

### At a glance:

Ryan Gregg and Rishi Narayan, co-owners

Founded in 2001

Current leadership since 2001

Primary business:  
specialized design services

Sites in Michigan: 6 • Sites elsewhere: 8

Full-time equivalent employees:  
89 in 2010 • 100 expected in 2011

www.undergroundshirts.com

A provider of custom-printed apparel, Underground Printing launched in a dorm room at the University of Michigan and now has 16 locations in nine states throughout the Midwest.



An important moment in Underground's growth story occurred in 2005 when it began to expand beyond its single location in Ann Arbor and open on other college campuses. Another pivotal point was in early 2009 when the company added retail sales. Until then, it had been offering custom screen-printing and embroidery services primarily to businesses. "By expanding into retail and building an inventory of preprinted merchandise, we were able to build the brand and service walk-in, everyday customers," says co-founder Ryan Gregg.

Information technology has also contributed to Underground's success. The company has developed proprietary IT that includes job ticketing and work flow systems, as well as inventory management, shipping, invoicing, Web store and point-of-sale systems.

"The efficiencies of these systems are what have allowed us to open 16 locations, with all employees having real-time access to company data," says co-owner Rishi Narayan.

During the past three years, Underground Printing achieved average annual revenue growth of 37 percent, and it projects a 32 percent increase for this year.



Unified Business Technologies Inc. (UBT) offers a broad portfolio of professional services to clients.

UBT launched in 1997 as a staffing company, providing IT professionals to the commercial sector, primarily automotive clients. In 2004 UBT began to focus its resources on becoming a full-service government contractor and added more services. Today it offers expertise not only in IT, but also engineering,

construction and facilities management, and environmental, health and safety services. The payoff: steady growth in annual revenue and workforce numbers.

An advocate of domestic employment, UBT is launching a Web project dedicated to bringing back jobs that have moved overseas. No Offshore Jobs will lay out the case against offshore outsourcing, and provide an array of tools to connect employers and job seekers, including a powerful database. The website will also compile the latest research and news about outsourcing and the job market.

UBT has won a number of awards, including CEO Michelle D'Souza being named the 2009 Michigan Minority Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration and one of the 2008 Entrepreneurs of the Year by *Enterprising Women* magazine.



Unified Business Technologies Inc.  
Troy

### At a glance:

Michelle D'Souza, CEO

Founded in 1997

Current leadership since 1997

Primary business: IT staffing, architecture and engineering services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 3

Full-time equivalent employees:  
80 in 2010 • 90 expected in 2011

www.ubtus.com



Wellco  
Royal Oak

### At a glance:

Scott Foster, president

Founded in 1996

Current leadership since 1996

Primary business:  
corporate wellness consulting

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
13 in 2010 • 19 expected in 2011

www.wellcocorp.com



Measurable results is Wellco's mantra. The company helps clients improve health costs and conditions with return-on-investment (ROI) systems, health risk appraisals, corporate wellness programs and consulting.

Wellco has developed a unique evaluation system for wellness programs, known as HealthHammer. The online system measures, assesses, and trims employee health risks such as heart disease, diabetes and depression

before they become more dangerous and costly. The system's average measured ROI is 2.9 to 1. In comparison, the typical employee wellness program has no data to show if it's working, says president Scott Foster.

What's more, employees aren't as healthy as they may think, adds Foster, citing some startling statistics:

- More than 90 percent of employees have at least one avoidable risk affecting medical costs.
- More than 25 percent are so unhealthy they should visit their doctor soon.
- Ninety-five percent of health care dollars go toward treatment rather than prevention.
- Seventy percent of medical costs are preventable.

In addition to using HealthHammer for its own wellness-program clients, Wellco also offers the system to employers, health plans and agents without requiring them to hire Wellco as their consultant. "As a result, competitors have become clients," says Foster.





XCEND Group Inc.  
Brighton

### At a glance:

Ron Schoenherr, president/CEO

Founded in 2005

Current leadership since 2006

Primary business: information technology

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
16 in 2010 • 22 expected in 2011

[www.xcendgroup.com](http://www.xcendgroup.com)

Specializing in IT management and security products including Symantec, the XCEND Group helps improve the productivity of its clients' IT departments, automating tasks that have historically been done in a manual fashion.

XCEND has set itself apart from other value-added resellers by developing its own line of software. This software takes business-intelligence concepts that traditionally have been used in financial and operational metrics and applies them to IT.

In 2009 XCEND introduced its first branded product, MetriX Real-Time Dashboard, which allows IT organizations to easily and quickly build real-time dashboards for all of their IT management and monitoring applications. "Organizations and IT create more data than ever before," says CEO Ron Schoenherr. "We provide a single-pane-of-glass view by consolidating key performance indicators from any database source, thereby creating a dashboard that turns data into information, making it both visible and actionable."

In 2010, in conjunction with its fifth anniversary, XCEND undertook a large-scale rebranding initiative. More than just an updated look, the company developed a business growth strategy that included a revamped website, new messaging and collateral, multichannel marketing, as well as innovations to its product base. The payoff: average monthly revenue increased 50 percent.



YourAreaCode  
Grand Rapids

### At a glance:

Steven Hummel, William Whitmire III and Orlando Stevenson III, co-owners

Founded in 2007

Current leadership since 2007

Primary business:  
advertising and public relations

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.yourareacode.com](http://www.yourareacode.com)

YourAreaCode (YAC) makes digital marketing easy for non-geeks.

The marketing and advertising firm initially launched as a real-time directory listing where people could find up-to-date information about businesses within their area code. Yet YAC soon realized that the tools it had developed to keep its directory updated could be used for other applications, such as helping small business owners manage their online presence and market themselves more aggressively.

For example, YAC's patent-pending Wexting technology enables clients to instantly and simultaneously update their websites, social media profiles and banner ads—and send out coupons to customers via SMS text messages and emails. Offering this service through annual contracts with a low monthly fee, YAC has been able to win a high rate of renewals while attracting new customers. The company averaged a 50 percent increase in annual revenue during the past two years and projects a 64 percent increase this year.

YAC prides itself on being a family-friendly employer and allows its staffers to bring their children into the office after school. The family focus also extends to YAC's philanthropic efforts. For example, the firm built a website for Juice Ball 2011, an annual event that raises money to supply take-home sack suppers for needy school children.



## Resources for second-stage business owners

### Growing your company



As your business grows, decisions become more complex and the expertise your company requires also changes. The MI-SBTDC Growth Group (G2) specialists provide services to prepare your company for this next stage. Steps include guiding you in the evaluation and selection of strategies using our comprehensive tools and extensive network of consultants.

Companies with the potential and desire to increase their sales, hire more employees or diversify into new markets can use the Michigan G2 Initiative. The specialists will help your team prioritize strategies, develop implementation plans and monitor your progress towards achieving success.

Qualified business specialists provide expertise on business models, financing, market research, market diversification, strategic actioning and using metrics to monitor your business. Growth Group Specialist, Nancy Boese, will answer your questions regarding the program: [boesen@gvsu.edu](mailto:boesen@gvsu.edu).

More information: [www.misbtcd.org](http://www.misbtcd.org)

### Small business is a big deal here



Going into business for yourself has always been the American Dream. We are working to make it the Michigan Dream. A robust network of public and private resources is in place to support entrepreneurs and grow small businesses.

Realizing your dream. That's Pure Michigan.

More information: [www.MichiganAdvantage.org](http://www.MichiganAdvantage.org)

### Michigan Business One Stop

The Michigan Business One Stop is a state-of-the-art resource that streamlines state services in one place, providing entrepreneurs and businesses with 24-hour online access to state government. The One Stop offers assistance with issues like licenses, permits and tax registrations, and features safe and secure e-payments. It is backed up by highly trained customer service specialists, available at 877.766.1779.

More information: [www.michigan.gov/business](http://www.michigan.gov/business)

### SBA can help you grow



The U.S. Small Business Administration's mission is to preserve free enterprise and to strengthen the economy

of our nation. We recognize that small business is where innovation thrives. Swifter and more flexible than big businesses, small firms lead the way in advancements in technology that drive our country forward. They keep intact the heritage of ingenuity and enterprise, and they help keep the American dream within reach of millions.

Every step of the way, SBA and our resource partners are there to help, from strategic planning to results-driven training, from long-term fixed asset financing at favorable rates to short-term lines of credit. We have the small business resources to help you manage your growth and take advantage of opportunities. Visit our website, call or email to see how we can help you. SBA Michigan District Office: 313.226.6075 or [michigan@sba.gov](mailto:michigan@sba.gov).

More information: [www.sba.gov/mi](http://www.sba.gov/mi)

### Helping second-stage entrepreneurs succeed



Thousands of companies like yours join the Small Business Association

of Michigan to achieve more than they could on their own. Our vision is simple: Michigan needs to promote economic gardening, which fosters the growth and prosperity of our own Michigan-based small businesses. The Small Business Association of Michigan's political power helps us champion second-stage entrepreneurs by influencing policy and working to keep your business needs foremost in the minds of our elected officials. We hold them accountable so that you can manage and grow your business. Unlike many other business organizations, everything the Small Business Association of Michigan does is focused exclusively on small business with no conflict from big business. Running your small business is your passion—being your champion is ours.

Our products and services are designed to save you time, save you money and help you succeed. Count on the Small Business Association of Michigan to get what you need to tackle human resources issues, legal questions, operational challenges, government relations issues and more. You can even receive one-on-one help at no cost to you.

More information: [www.sbam.org](http://www.sbam.org)



# COMCAST BUSINESS CLASS CONNECTS MICHIGAN BUSINESSES TO THE WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY.

Comcast Business Class provides the latest communication technology to help businesses save money and increase productivity. Get your business connected with the following features and 24/7 support.



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Fast downloads up to 16 Mbps  
Norton™ Business Suite and Microsoft® Communications Package included  
Free website building tools & hosting



## Comcast Business Class Voice

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Best in call clarity  
One business directory listing included



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## Save energy. Save money. Use DTE Energy's small business toolbox.

DTE Energy has many programs designed to help your small business save energy and money. Incentives and rebates focused on energy efficiency projects, tips on insulation, energy efficient lighting, and customized energy audits are only a few of the items in a toolbox specifically designed for you. Invest in energy efficiency today through Your Energy Savings programs and see the difference it will make in your business's bottom line.

You can even use some of those savings to show your customers you care about the environment by enrolling in Detroit Edison's **GreenCurrents** renewable energy program.

Visit [dteenergy.com/saveenergy](http://dteenergy.com/saveenergy) or call **1-800-477-4747** to find out how your small business can save energy and money.

**DTE Energy**



The Power of Your Community | **e = DTE®**

# Cash flow isn't just important to business. It's everything.

PNC knows that cash flow is the lifeblood of your business. That's why we're committed to offering cash flow options that help improve your cash position. Our relationship managers will help you develop a total cash flow solution customized to your specific needs. From improved ways to both collect and make payments, to opportunities to effectively invest cash for financing the growth of your business, to online resources to help manage cash flow. Everything you need to enhance your cash flow today and in the future.



**Call David L. Morrison at 248-729-8483 or the  
PNC Service Center at 1-800-PNC-7908.**

PNC is proud to support Michigan Celebrates Small Business.

**Business Checking<sup>1</sup> | Remote Deposit<sup>2</sup> | Merchant Services<sup>3</sup> | Lines of Credit<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Banking and lending products and services and bank deposit products are provided by PNC Bank, National Association, **Member FDIC**. <sup>2</sup> Remote Deposit is subject to bank approval. <sup>3</sup> Merchant services are provided by PNC Merchant Services Company and subject to credit approval. <sup>4</sup> All loans and lines of credit are subject to credit approval. ©2011 The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

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