

The (High) Definition of Success

By Elaine Carlson

When long-time and prospective clients stop by the office of Reed Security in Saskatoon or its Internet home at reedsecurity.com, they can't miss noticing something.

The 10-year-old locally-owned security firm has distinguished itself in a series of business award categories over the past few years that attest to the company's commitment to service. In a marketplace dominated by security giants with multi-million dollar promotional budgets, Reed Security most recently was named a 2010 SABEX finalist in both the Small Business of the Year and Customer Service award categories. Reed Security was also named Small Business of the Year by the North Saskatoon Business Association (NSBA) and a finalist in NSBA's New Direction Award category.

Owner Virgil Reed couldn't be happier.

"We used to be the third quote when businesses were shopping around for a security firm. Now we've become the standard against which they measure others. It's definitely helped us increase sales. Now we have over 2,500 clients in Saskatoon and area."

Dedication to customer service had made the difference to Reed Security. "There's very fierce competition in the security business for alarm sales," he says.

"You can try to offer the lowest prices, and we do; we're the only security company in Canada with a five-dollar monthly monitoring fee for the first year. But the solution for us has been our ability to provide custom solutions to our

clients instead of just being an alarm dealer. That's where our biggest growth is now."

When a client comes to Reed Security with a particular security challenge, Reed and his team spring into action, researching products until they can recommend a customized solution. "We can do this because we're small and flexible and not tied into to a specific security product or protocol."

That—and the ability to shop the world via the Internet—means that Reed Security clients now have access to an astonishing array of security possibilities, from rapid response intrusion monitoring to fire, medical, flood, temperature, or carbon monoxide emergencies and more. "The newest thing we're offering is high

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Photo: Cal Fehr

Taking a byte out of crime: Virgil Reed shows off Reed Security's high-definition video surveillance, which greatly enhances vehicle and facial identification by police.

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definition video surveillance, a technology that lets us identify faces and license plates on recorded video. Now instead of grainy pictures police can't use, we can actually help solve crime," Reed says.

The commitment to go the extra mile on behalf of clients is implicit in the company's motto—Excellence Takes Effort. "We never lose sight of that," Reed says with pride, although he is quick to acknowledge the contribution eight employees make every day. To keep everyone happy and motivated, Reed empowers his employees to make decisions and incorporates fun into the workplace, from staff barbecues to movie days when everyone goes out for lunch and a movie. "It's a way of showing appreciation, it builds morale, and it boosts productivity."

Reed's personal vision is behind it all.

"I worked for the largest security company in the world for two and a half years before I started Reed Security in 2000. But all along, I thought I could do some

things differently and offer clients better solutions at a more affordable price." When his employer downsized and people were laid off, Reed acted quickly. "That gave me a ready-made workforce right out of the gate."

Reed laughs at his youthful enthusiasm; he was only 25 at the time. "What we failed to factor in was that we needed the sales to justify the salaries."

Thankfully, Peg and Les Leskewich, Reed's angel investors, didn't lose faith in his vision. Reed recently bought them out, but he remains grateful for their mentoring: "Now it's my turn to pay it forward." In that vein, he's been in discussions with some First Nations after an expression of interest in a joint venture security operation.

"I don't see expanding to locations outside Saskatoon right now," Reed says.

"Saskatoon is a great place. Costs are reasonably low. We can accomplish double

"Saskatoon still isn't too corporate. It's our biggest city, but it still has the small town Saskatchewan feeling where clients accept the concept of a work-life balance. It's a great place to be!"

the work in a day than we could in Calgary because driving and commuting time is minimal. And the economy is diversified and vibrant. Best of all, Saskatoon still isn't too corporate. It's our biggest city, but it still has the small-town Saskatchewan feeling where clients accept the concept of a work-life balance. It's a great place to be." —