

Web Posted: 08/21/2008 10:07 CDT

InGenesis named to Inc.'s Top 5,000 list

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Early in Veronica Edwards' adult working life, she landed a job at Southwestern Bell Wireless, a predecessor of AT&T's cell phone business.

At one point, she had 1,000 sales people under her and a \$25 million budget. But she left to launch her own human resources company in 1998, finding experts for various telecom clients.

She credits her time in telecoms for giving her the experience she needed to succeed in the medical staffing industry.

Ranked 89th among America's fastest-growing human resources companies, InGenesis Medical Staffing is a newcomer to this year's Inc. magazine Top 5,000, a survey of the fastest-growing private companies in the United States.

InGenesis reported revenue of \$2.7 million in 2007 and sales growth of 182.7 percent over the three-year period 2004-07 reviewed for the survey. It was one of 25 San Antonio firms to make the list.

Edwards, 44, would not have made the survey had she not taken a gamble on the medical industry at a critical point in her firm's 10-year existence.

In the late 1990s, in the heady days of telecom mergers and stock market excesses, headhunting for telecoms was great, Edwards said. But she was nervous.

"I sat back and thought, five to 10 years down the road, there's no way telecoms are going to continue this way," Edwards recalled.

Looking for an alternative before the bottom fell out, she focused on health care. In the aging baby boom population she saw financial security, and she began cultivating clients in an unfamiliar field.

"My first client was the Mayo Clinic," Edwards said. "I got a couple of neurosurgeon orders. I started retooling the business. Those first 15 months were golden because telecom was still going strong and I was getting some medical industry business.

"The next summer, the telecoms burst," she said.

But by then she was getting established in the medical industry. Her clients now span the industry from for-profit to public institutions. She is, for example, the primary staffing provider to the University of Texas Health Science Center and its affiliates.

Edwards credits her rapid rise in medical staffing to her experience in telecom marketing. Telecoms were aggressive in defining and delivering full-service, state-of-the-art packages at a time when health care providers were still pushing boxes of paper through channels of bureaucracy.

Edwards offered an interactive, online database to her clients.

Now operating in five states, the firm is a certified federal government vendor. It has a Small Business Administration mentor in Arora Group Inc. of Gaithersburg, Md., a major medical staffing firm in the government sector.

"InGenesis is the third company we've mentored," said Dr. Sudhir Arora, company founder.

The mentor/protégé relationship allows a smaller company to manage a piece of a contract that would be too large for it alone. It also gives protégé firms the experience they need to go after other government contracts, Arora said.

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Turner is on the InGenesis executive advisory board. A former chief nurse at Wilford Hall Medical Center, Turner said it's her impression that Edwards' success comes from a strong ethical grounding and forthrightness.

"She says exactly what she means and means exactly what she says," Turner said. "I personally like dealing with people that can operate on that level."



Veronica Edwards of InGenesis Medical Staffing

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