



## { ruby receptionists }

**A virtual** reception company headquartered in Portland's Pearl District, Ruby Receptionists takes pride in its customized service answering phones for small law firms and at-home businesses across the country. But when the fledgling company's customer base grew to more than 500 clients by the end of 2006, owner Jill Nelson feared her team of 24 employees was losing its personal touch.

"When we were smaller we did get to know a lot of all of our clients' businesses and got to know them personally," Nelson says. "It's impossible to maintain that to the same extent, and we never want to lose that."

With 75 percent of its client base located on the East Coast, personal visits were out of the question. So Nelson created a note card campaign — a much cheaper alternative that allowed her customer service staff to maintain personal relationships with clients while at the same time increasing the consistency of their communications. They designed a set of three "Ruby" note cards: "From the desk of Ruby", "Thank You", and "Happy Anniversary" cards. The cards are now sent whenever a client makes changes to his account, refers new business, or celebrates a one-, two-, or three-year anniversary with the company. When the company's receptionists notice a client's special event such as winning a big case or celebrating a birthday or wedding, the customer service team sends a card as well.

"We're this high tech, 21st century solution. But we're still trying to hang on to the old-fashioned personal service," Nelson says. "This simple, easy, inexpensive program has shown to be very effective from a client retention, referral, and appreciation standpoint" — *Libby Tucker*



DAN CARTER/COMMERCE

**LEAPS AND BOUNDS is a new feature in COMMERCE highlighting creative solutions that small businesses have found for their everyday problems.** Email your business problem and innovative solution to [libby.tucker@dcjconegon.com](mailto:libby.tucker@dcjconegon.com).