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Advance Services sees momentum with expanded local headquarters

by Michelle Leach

What started as a conversation between husband and wife in an Omaha grocery store 20 years ago has evolved into Advance Services — a company generating sales of \$120 million annually, 52 locations and as many as 6,000 employees on its payroll, depending on time of year.

“We’re looking to move further east, and we have a development team working in that area,” said co-owner and President Paul Sandall of future growth opportunities, referencing Ohio. “It has to be a match for us and the existing client base, we call it ‘filling in.’”

Advance Services provides a number of staffing solutions to meet businesses’ needs — from planned and seasonal staffing, special projects and full-time staffing to professional placements and long-term staffing.

Tied to its expanding footprint, a map on its website features a number of offices in the Midwest and mountain States, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, New Jersey, Washington, California and Puerto Rico, and the company references its providing services in 27 states.

“Puerto Rico has been one of our fairly new [offices],” Sandall said in mid-May. “It’s interesting doing business in the territory. The work culture has been fun to deal with.”

In a nod to its growth, in a 2009 Midlands Business Journal feature, Sandall reported Advance Services had 37 offices, reportedly employed 115 people and its payroll averaged 3,600 people.

In May, Sandall said it employed 180 people, and its temporary staff spanned 3,800 to 6,000 employees to accommodate seasonal variations.

“We sent out just under 20,000 W-2s,” Sandall said. “We print all of those here in Norfolk. It’s a celebration when that’s done.”

In this vein, Norfolk remains the company’s accounting center; however, the community formerly represented its headquarters.

Today, its headquarters are in the metro. “It was a progression,” Sandall said, noting it went through the process of migrating its daily administrative functions toward the end of 2009. “We needed to be more centrally located. It took awhile to get it all moved over there.”

More to this, Sandall indicated as the company continued to grow, Norfolk was beyond “daily driving distance” from a logisti-



Founders/owners Gretchen and Paul Sandall ... Omaha-headquartered staffing firm seeks to expand territory eastward.

cal standpoint — especially as expansion took Advance Services to the West Florida, Florida and Puerto Rico.

Eppley Airport, he noted, was key to meeting the demands that came with expansion.

“We recently moved to Southport in La Vista,” Sandall said. “We have 75 percent of the second floor of Mutual of Omaha Bank.”

This growth has occurred within a short timeframe; Sandall noted it started the move in fall 2012.

In addition to its administrative office at 12702 Westport Parkway, Advance Services boasts a central office at 9628 M St. and a downtown location at 225 15th St.

“Omaha has quite a large pool of skilled administrative people to draw from,” Sandall said.

Off of a “tremendous” 2011, Sandall said in 2012 its headquarters move was accompanied by revamped software — making for a particularly busy year.

“We had outgrown our software,” he said. “The biggest difference with this new software that we have put in place is the employee and customer access. Businesses have had to change their work model in the last five to 10

years to deal with the virtual business environment.”

In this vein, Sandall noted its revamped infrastructure allows employees access to information via a Web portal — a big departure from existing software capabilities, providing a competitive edge.

According to company information, its employees cover a full spectrum — from entry-level assembly workers to seasoned managers and from accountants to high-level administrative assistants, with some personnel employed at Fortune 500 companies (50 such firms in all).

As of 2009, it was also reportedly averaging \$80 million in revenue for three consecutive years.

Even as the business has grown, its family foundation has remained unchanged.

Sandall started Advance Services with wife, Gretchen Sandall.

Children, nieces and nephews are also involved in the business (and have, in at least one case, spun off other businesses).

“You are only able to grow as fast as your internal structure, and we have a strong internal structure,” Paul Sandall said. “I’m happy

to say that if something did happen to me, the company would continue to prosper.”

He noted that there has been enough

Advance Services

Phone: 866-331-3499 (Omaha admin)

Address: 12702 Westport Parkway, Suite 201, La Vista 68138 (admin)

Founded: 1994 in Norfolk by Gretchen and Paul Sandall

Services: planned/seasonal staffing, special projects, full-time and long-term staffing, professional placements

Employees: 180 (plus another 3,800 to 6,000 temps)

Goals: Eye on eastward expansion, including in Ohio.

Industry outlook: Staffing providers substantially benefit organizations with continued ACA rollout. Relying more and more on a third party to fill out employment gaps.

Website: www.advanceservices.com

growth to accommodate various individuals’ skill levels, which he indicated is an especially vital facet of a family business, which demands being deliberate with regard to how talent is deployed.

“In many ways, we can’t believe it’s been 20 years, but then we can’t believe it’s only been 20 years,” Gretchen Sandall said.

In some respects, the company formerly headquartered out of Norfolk is also coming full circle — and back to its roots.

“It seems like the first day,” she said. “We lived in Omaha at the time we made the decision to start this business.”

Sandall recalled her and Paul going to what was at the time a Cub Foods store at 114th Street and West Dodge Road, looking at her husband and saying: “There’s no reason for us not to do this. I just know this is the right thing to do.”

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