



Small Business Strategies

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Fringe benefits

Although the personal concierge market is growing in Atlanta, it is difficult to find two companies with exactly the same mission. They share the basic idea, but cater to a different market and offer a variety of services.

When Andrea Arena-Breitenbach, 28, founded 2 Places at 1 Time in 1991, it was a personal errand service. The company has expanded since, and it is now contracted by Andersen Consulting to run an in-house concierge service in both the firm's South and Pacific regions. The Atlanta-based company now employs 19 people, including Arena-Breitenbach, in cities across the country.

"We put our people on Andersen's premises," she says. "You can call your own concierge on the premises, and Andersen pays a significant portion of the bill." Andersen Consulting employees pay \$10 per hour for bonded services, such as allowing 2 Places at 1 Time into their home or car, and pays \$5 per hour for unbonded services.

Only in Atlanta has 2 Places at 1 Time retained its personal service. Arena-Breitenbach charges \$25 per hour, with the half-hour prorated.

The 4-year-old company now grosses \$1 million per year, and Arena-Breitenbach's goal is to double that figure next year. "People are starting to realize the value of their time," she says. "... It used to [just] be money, money, money."

Two different types of people employ her services, she says: "people who don't have the time and people who don't want to do it themselves.

"Companies are downsizing," she adds, "and they are therefore not employing people to run errands and help executives. We'll bring back the moon for you."

And 2 Places at 1 Time has done just about everything under the moon. Authorized with a power of attorney, Arena-Breitenbach pays bills, uses an ATM card and cosigns on a client's checking account. She keeps people's grocery lists on file, and even sold a client's car.

"You know everything about [your clients]," Arena-Breitenbach says.