

Diana-Louise Carter  
Staff writer

(June 4, 2007) — *Mirror Show Management, a company that designs and builds trade show displays, prides itself on customer service.*

*Perhaps that's why MSM, founded in 1993, continues to have loyal customers at large companies such as Eastman Kodak Co. despite Kodak's downsizing. In fact, some of Kodak's former employees create new business for MSM when they move on.*

*This kind of customer loyalty may also be why MSM landed on the Rochester Top 100 list for 2006, an annual listing of the Rochester-area companies with the largest revenue growth. It was the company's third time on the list compiled by the Rochester Business Alliance and KPMG.*

*MSM is growing in other ways, too. It had planned to expand in its leased space on Central Avenue, but soon realized that the company's 55 employees had outgrown even the projected expansion space. So early this year, MSM found space to buy in Webster and plans to relocate in November.*

*Here, Donna M. Shultz, president of Mirror Show Management, talks about growth in a shrinking economy.*

**You've partnered frequently with Eastman Kodak Co. and other major employers in Rochester. Because they continue to downsize, how does MSM continue to prosper?**

Our growth has been in large part a result of our key customers finding new opportunities as a result of downsizing. For example, we have a long-term Kodak customer who is downsized. This customer relocates from Rochester to work for a pharmaceutical company in North Carolina. He immediately calls us to manage the trade shows for his new company.

Also, members of our team take great pride as "Everyday Heroes" who'll do virtually anything for our customers (who) ... appreciate that and stay connected to us wherever the road leads them.

**Many companies make cuts by sending employees to fewer conferences and trade shows. How do you continue to grow in the face of this?**

Human capital matters. Companies with the vision to invest in their human capital are companies that flourish. We believe we're one of those companies, and we cater to those types of companies. Although attendance is down overall, many of the shows we manage are on an upward trend. Clearly, conferences and trade shows remain an effective developmental tool for many companies, and MSM's devotion to client service affords us continuing growth opportunities.

**What do you think is the best thing MSM does to retain employees?**

Interestingly, we have a core team of six employees who were part of our first year launch. They're still with us, and continue to be key to our success. But good news travels, and our recruitment averages close to 70 percent from employee referrals. We're proud of that.

**You work in a highly creative field all day and then you go home to a family that includes two young children. How do you recharge your creative juices?**

While my partner, Tom (MacAllister, leader of the design team and co-owner with Shultz), is truly the creative one, keeping those "juices" flowing has never been a zero-sum game. We expect all of our team to be creative on behalf of our clients, and when creative people work collaboratively,

the creative juices don't dissipate, they actually grow and flow. Because of this, I have plenty left in the tank when I get home. And if you can't be creative and energized around kids, the most curious and creative creatures around, then something's lacking, I think.

**What causes are you passionate about?**

In business, where talk is often centered on competition, there is the lingering danger that one can lose touch with the human side of the equation. Fortunately, my cohorts at work and my family at home care deeply for others, and we're able to put our efforts and money where our mouth is.

At MSM we vote on our charitable focus each year, and this year we're focusing on the YWCA and CA