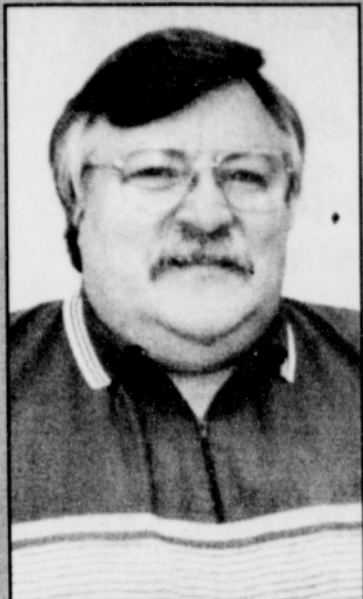


Minority Business Week

Spirit Communications



Clyde Stryker, a Native American business owner of Spirit Communications

against everybody else.

I wanted to do things like create jobs for other Native American people and train them - teach them a trade which they could use elsewhere. And, create some opportunities for people to develop themselves. That was the primary driving factor to form Spirit Communications.

What were your company's growth challenges?

In our first year, we developed a business plan that allowed for a 20% growth rate for 5 years. I figured that was as aggressive as I should go or dare to go. As it turned out, we exceeded that business plan in the first year of the full five year plan. So, we experienced growth from the beginning all the way up to the first five years. It was a real roller coaster ride. After having a taste of it, growth is

not as important as the quality of the environment. Growth is going to happen out of necessity, not because I want it to happen. Outside factors are going to drive it. Each time that growth arises, I'm going to go back and ask myself if it's really a good thing for us and if it's really what we want to do. Whereas before, we just took on more and got going faster. Next thing you know, you're just running and kind of out of balance.

What could you have done differently to expand your business?

Change my plan of attack, schedule better, deal differently with the federal government and control my business growth.

We grew real fast. It created problems like not having enough resources (technicians to take on the jobs). You also tend to lose your identity. The foundation blocks that were really

important to us was our workmanship and how we stand behind it.

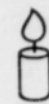
As you start to really grow, there's a whole new set of hoops you need to jump through. And at a certain point, I stopped and sat down. We did a re-evaluation and changed our direction back to our original course. You have to always be checking your compass and keep in mind where your destination is and stay focused on that.

Any advice to other minority-owned businesses?

Work real hard. Many people have a perception of 'I'm going to work for myself and I'm going to be in control of my life and do what I want to do.' Just the opposite happens. You work long hours. You are the business. Be prepared to put your nose to the grindstone and go the extra mile.

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Spirit Communications was formed in 1993 by Clyde Stryker. The business involves installation and maintenance of voice and data systems. Spirit Communication's first three years concentrated on local projects and smaller commercial companies. In its fourth year they have expanded into larger government and private projects. They had serviced the U.S. Courts, the Port of Portland, the Federal Building, The Air National Guard, and U.S. Marshal's Service.

How did your business get started?

We began as a home based business with one employee and have grown to our current office with over 6000 square feet and warehouse space with up to 30 employees in 1997.

What were some of the challenges you had faced that were unique to being a minority - owned business?

I don't count on being minority-certified as a means of doing business. If you stand on that alone, you'll be in for a big disappointment. In the sense of competing, marketing or pricing, you have to go toe to toe

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