

Staying Strong

Athletes' Performance finds success through brand loyalty

By Stephanie Conner



Future pro football stars have called this workout facility home away from home.

This month's NFL Draft might be a little something to hold you over until football's preseason. But for Phoenix-based Athletes' Performance, it's a serious day for business.

That's because the company trains elite athletes like NFL draft picks. In fact, they had nine first-round picks in 2009 and have trained the number one overall pick

for four straight years. Founded in 1999, the company offers integrated performance training for elite athletes, military personnel and business executives.

"When a client — whether it's an athlete or an executive — comes to us, that client is not just working with a personal trainer," explains CEO Dan Burns. "They're working with eight to 10 professionals," including coaches in speed, power and agility, a physical therapist, a nutritionist and even a chef.

Athletes' Performance also trains C-level executives and partnered with CEO Challenges, which runs sports competitions specifically for execs, to launch the CEO Fitness Challenge. Facilities in Phoenix, Los Angeles and Dallas are testing local executives this spring to help identify and honor the "Fittest CEO" in each city and the nation.

"We're trying to introduce more of our executive clientele to the CEO Challenges," says Athletes' Performance VP Marty Weems.

"It's a great motivational opportunity."

Burns acknowledges Athletes' Performance has benefited from having professional athletes as a significant part of the client base. Still, he says, all businesses are affected by the recession, and like other companies, Athletes' Performance had to reallocate resources last year — leading to top line revenue growth. Burns attributes much of this success to the strength of the brand.

"We treat our brand very carefully and hold it to very high standards," he says.

That has meant saying "no" to potential revenue generators that they believe might have diminished the brand. The short-term revenue sacrifice, Burns says, is worth it.

"We haven't lost a sponsor in five years," he adds. "Our brand really stands for something."

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Athletes' Performance

www.athletesperformance.com

Just Be Yourself

They've Got Your ID Covered

By Lori K. Baker



Positive ID: Merchants Information Solutions CEO Russ Johnson

Should Valley entrepreneurs be more concerned about identity theft than those elsewhere?

Russ Johnson, president and CEO of Merchants Information Solutions, Inc., says the answer is yes. "Arizona has the unenviable position of being number one in the nation in identity theft for at least five years in a row, according to the Federal Trade Commission," says the head of the Phoenix-based company that provides identity theft and background screening services. "And small businesses with 100

employees or fewer appear to be most vulnerable to business ID theft."

Identity theft can take a heavy financial toll, with \$200,000 as the

And who are the typical identity thieves? Not cyber hackers, Johnson says, but the "insider threat" from current and former employees, clients and vendors—people who have access to your valued and sensitive information.

Merchants Information Solutions has teamed up with NXG Strategies, LLC, to provide an innovative new fix for the problem. The new service, called IDSafeBiz, responds to fraud in which a company's name, address, tax identification number, bank accounts, credit cards and other identifying information are used without the business principals' knowledge or consent. IDSafeBiz provides fully-managed restoration services for a business victim of ID theft or fraud, response services following a data breach, and identity theft recovery for principals, owners and titled officers.

"It's not a question of if, but when will a small business experience an ID theft, fraud or data breach event," Johnson warns.

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