

Helping small businesses thrive

DLB Consulting aims to help owners achieve goals

By **TONY NATALE**
TRIBUNE

More than 95 percent of Arizona employers are small business owners, according to the Arizona Department of Commerce.

And 80 percent of small businesses in Arizona fail during the first five years of operation, said the Commerce department.

These statistics are the foundation — and driving force — behind the success of DLB Consulting, a small accounting and consulting firm started seven years ago by Debbie Boyd in a spare bedroom at her Tempe home.

Today, her company has five full-time employees and operates from a second-floor office at 1619 E. Guadalupe Road, Tempe, not far from the Boyd's home in Tempe.

Besides computerized accounting services and programs, DLB Consulting helps small businesses make it through the tough, formative years so they can avoid becoming fatal statistics.

"Our business has tripled since we started," said Boyd, 51, a professional accountant who admittedly loves numbers, especially when they tell a small business owner the "entire story" about how to survive.

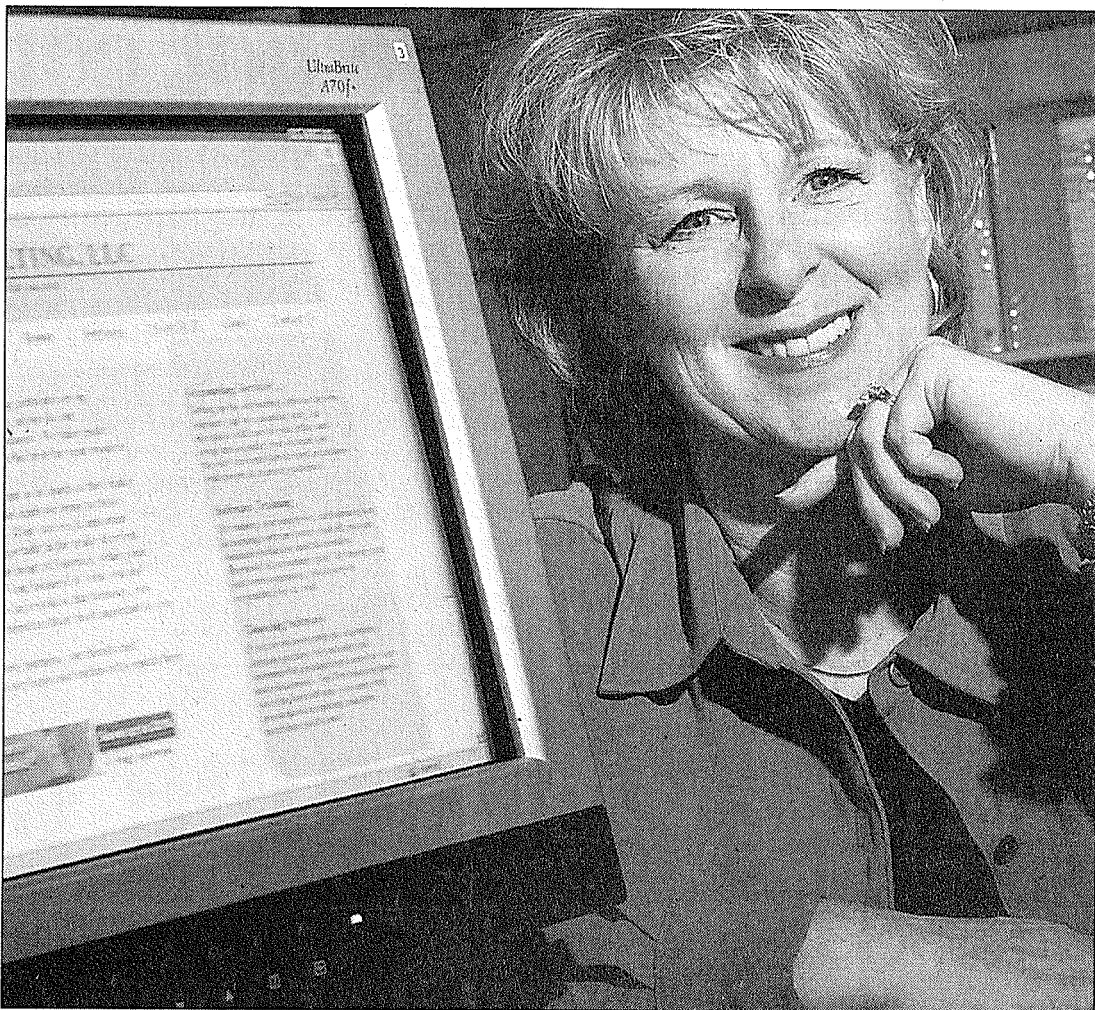
"So many owners start their business from a single point-of-view, but they tend to forget about all the other aspects of running a business like marketing, tax accounts, payroll, human resources," said Boyd. "That's where we come in."

DLB Consultants provides not only a computerized plan for handling a variety of a company's numbers, but also makes surveys, recommendations and guides individual workers who must deal with complicated accounting problems.

"We look at a much bigger picture," said Boyd. "We breakdown the current systems and implement successfully proven procedures and systems. As a result, we eliminate erroneous business practices, train the staff and start an accounting system that stays with the company and grows with it."

"We help business owners achieve realistic expectations."

Her company letterhead has an image of a compass pointing north next to her



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BOOMING BUSINESS: Debra Boyd started her company, DLB Consulting, seven years ago.

Debra L. Boyd

Age: 51

Family: Married to Don, mechanical engineer for Salt River Project; three grown children

Business: Founder and owner of DLB Consultants, an accounting and consulting firm mostly for small businesses in the East Valley

Key achievement: Started as a one-employee, home-based business in 1998 and today has five workers and tripled the number of clients

Success philosophy: Develop a plan and stick with it. Don't wing it.

firm's motto:

"Charting your course for financial success."

Boyd began her journey through the numbers back in 1971 when she graduated from Pikeville High School in Pikeville, Kentucky.

"A total of 71 seniors, including me, graduated in 1971," said Boyd, who later studied accounting at Eastern Kentucky University and began her career as a controller for both private and public accounting firms.

She moved to Arizona 20 years ago, took additional courses at Scottsdale Community College, worked for accounting firms and, in 1998, decided it was time to become her own boss.

Her husband, Don, a

mechanical engineer for Salt River Project, helped her setup a home-based office and bought her a brass compass for her desk.

"I enjoyed working from home because it gave me a lot of flexibility and time to spend with my husband," said Boyd. "But, as business picked up mostly by word-of-mouth, I had to decide to expand."

Three years ago — and with a growing list of clients — Boyd moved her home office to her present space on the second floor of a commercial complex near E. Guadalupe Road and McClintock Drive.

Todd Woods, a franchise partner for the sale of Jamba Juice products, said his challenge was hiring bookkeepers that were consistent.

"We discovered that bookkeepers had different approaches to keeping our books, so about a year ago we asked Debbie to become our second pair of eyes," said Woods, who owns five of 13 Jamba Juice locations in the Valley.

"Now, we not only have consistent bookkeeping but Debbie checks them once a month. We're very happy with her and her work."

George Crouch, owner of Advotech Company, Inc. of Tempe, said his small business is thriving, thanks to help from Boyd and her employees.

"Once each month, Debbie checks our day-to-day activities so that by the end of the year we know we've done all our accounting work properly," said Crouch. "She's a God-sent."

Boyd, who goes by Debbie, said besides profits one of her more satisfying aspects of her growing business is the direct involvement with small business owners like Woods.

"There are so many small business owners who really want to do things right and succeed," said Boyd. "It's that kind of attitude that makes my work fun and a lot more fulfilling."

Boyd rarely returns to her native Pikeville, Kentucky, which is about 150 miles east of Louisville primarily because her parents and other relatives now live here, including her younger sister, Regina Schwartz, a certified public accountant who lives in Surprise, Ariz.

"My goal is to retire by age 59, then let my sister take over the company," said Boyd. "If I stick with my goals, I'll be able to build a business that will have equity and provide for my retirement years."

"Like I say, develop a plan and stick with it."

For more information call (480) 839-0730 or visit www.dlbconsulting.com.

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