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TEXAS' LARGEST RURAL LENDER

The Houston Fast 100 is a remarkable assembly of Houston's fastest-growing companies, ranked by percentage of revenue growth from 2006 to 2008.

In addition, this section includes the Power Five — companies with less than \$1 million in revenue for at least two of the three years considered.

As in past years, there was an additional selections process for Enterprise Champions — companies that, in addition to growth, stand out in the areas of community service, corporate culture and overcoming challenges.

As part of the Enterprise Champions selections process, executives of 10 Enterprise Champion Finalists were interviewed in depth by a panel of representatives from the Houston Fast 100 sponsors. According to the process, five companies are chosen as Enterprise Champions — two that ranked in the top half of the Houston Fast 100, two that ranked in the bottom half of the Houston Fast 100 and one company in the Power Five.

We congratulate the Enterprise Champions and, equally, all of the companies on the 2009 Houston Fast 100 and Power Five lists. This year, we have spotlighted a variety of these fast-growing compa-

nies and are sharing insights from their leaders. All companies stand to gain from their example.

We thank our sponsors, led again this year by presenting sponsor Whitney National Bank, along with G&A Partners, Pierpont Communications Inc., Staples Inc., Reliant Energy and Verizon Wireless. Their contributions for this program include many hours devoted to the Enterprise Champions interviewing and selection process.

Many thanks also go to the business owners and managers from Houston Fast 100 companies who took time to share their stories with us, to our advertisers for their support and to the *Houston Business Journal* staff members who worked on this section.



John C. Beddow
Publisher
Houston Business Journal

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Many of Houston's fastest-growing companies have seen rough times before, and have plans in place to weather the current storm.



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HOUSTON FAST 100

2009 ENTERPRISE CHAMPIONS



Amsys Innovative Solutions

No. 1 – POWER FIVE

CEO: Khalid “Ken” Parekh

Coming to the United States from India at age 19, Ken Parekh refers to his life as a “typical immigrant story,” but his success and contributions as a Houston business owner are far from typical.



In just two years, his bootstrap IT company achieved 340 percent revenue growth, from \$250,000 in 2006 to \$1.1 million in 2008.

Having earned engineering and communication degrees in his native country, Parekh always had a

knack for technology. With \$100 in the bank and an office set up in a spare bedroom, the young entrepreneur began his initial “service-based” IT support business. As Amsys evolved to include on-demand and project-based services, the company outgrew Parekh’s home and in 2003 he leased space. His customer base also evolved from small businesses to medium-sized ones with 50 to 1,000 users — companies large enough to afford technical help, but not large enough to hire in-house IT staff.

“We also service businesses with two to 10 users,” he says. “We will never forget the customers who made us what we are today.”

Within the company’s customer niche, Parekh combines his two areas of expertise: Technology and making businesses profitable.

“The goal is helping make clients more profitable,” he says. “I’m a business owner myself. I love technology, but business is in my blood.”

The sponsor of an orphanage near his birthplace, Parekh also firmly believes in honoring his roots and redistributing the wealth he has been given.

“What I used to make in a month in India, I make here in an hour,” he says. “I believe when God distributes wealth to people, it is your duty to redistribute it to those people who really need it. I never want to forget where I came from.”

Catch the Moment

No. 53 – FAST 100

CEO: Richard Didow

Through Catch the Moment, owners Richard and Carol Didow use the same technology that made Superman fly to create unique souvenirs for mere mortals.

Granted, the “green screen” technology that placed Superman among the clouds and high-rise buildings had already been developed, but in 2000 the Didows developed a portable green-screen system and later patented a realistic lighting system for it. Today, the company’s portable photo system allows its staff to attend customers’ events and, within minutes, provide guests with lifelike photographs of themselves escaping from Alcatraz, being attacked by Alfred Hitchcock’s birds or smiling on the cover of *Rolling Stone Magazine*.

“The green screen has been around for a long time,” Richard Didow says. “What hasn’t is the ability to put out 100 photos an hour. That’s new.”

The company is often the life of the party at corporate and private events, but also has

Every year, the Houston Business Journal recognizes leading businesses from among the Houston Fast 100 winning companies to be honored with individual “Enterprise Champion” awards.

These companies are set apart not only in growth and industry leadership, but in contributions to employees, community and to their respective industries.

Companies considered for this award submitted additional information. Finalists were selected from these applications and were interviewed by a panel of judges.

donated its services to fundraising events for organizations such as the American Heart Association, Red Cross and Citizens for Animal Protection.

“With themed events, you have to think: How are you going to entertain your clients?” Didow says. “What are you going to give them that they really want? Everybody wants a picture of themselves.”



The company has added software developers to keep up with changing technology. In 2008, Catch the Moment was the first in the industry to host online photos to be sent to social networking sites.

“We have three staff people and a manager who do nothing but development,” Didow says. “It’s a big investment.”

Fommy.com

No. 93 – FAST 100

CEO: Pinakin Dinesh

Owned by husband and wife Pinakin and Pallavi Dinesh, Fommy.com targets cell phone owners — and accommodates as many of them as it can.

While cell phone companies are mainly interested in selling their service, Fommy.com fills the accessory void, stocking and shipping accessories for every major variety of cell phone sold.



“The demand is there,” says Pinakin Dinesh. “Every iPhone user buys at least three accessories. The carriers are selling their services; they are only interested in the pipe. It is a very niche-built business

we are into, and we want to be the best in that niche.”

The company takes orders for everything from extended batteries to pink cell phone cases.

“There is a segment of ‘tweens’ and teens who, the minute they get their phones, ask: ‘How can I personalize it?’” says Pallavi Dinesh.

The couple began their business in Virginia in 2003 and moved to Texas in 2008.

The company stresses environmental sustainability in its operations, reusing every piece of packing material possible and supplying its warehouse with only one waste barrel. Potentially discarded cell phones are collected for redistribution to U.S. soldiers

overseas.

While other companies are focusing on the recession, Fommy.com — the name developed from the phrase, “For me and my mobile” — is working to keep up with a growing number of new products on the market.

“There are new cell phones and smart phones being released or announced every week, it seems,” Pallavi Dinesh says. “That’s the fun part of our lives, but it is also a challenge to keep pace with new products.”

Lasco Enterprises LLC

No. 13 – FAST 100

CEO: Jerry Lasco

When Continental Airlines Inc. pilot Jerry Lasco found himself transplanted and then furloughed in Houston after 9/11, he noticed there were no wine bars in the area.

In 2003, he opened the first combined wine bar and retail wine store in the uptown area. Now with 175 employees, four more Houston locations and one in Austin, it is safe to say that the venture was well-received. The Tasting Room and Max’s Wine Dive are strategically located in high-traffic, urban areas targeting those with disposable income.



“We don’t see a suburban draw with this model,” says co-owner Jonathan Horowitz. “It’s not for everywhere and everybody.”

The company’s carefully laid plans include an emphasis on growth of its retail component, drawing some of the wine-buying market from big-box grocery stores with competitive pricing. The locations also serve as a venue for private, corporate and charitable events.

Since the Tasting Room opened as the first wine bar to incorporate retail sales with on-premise bar sales, similar businesses have followed suit.

“It’s not the most unique concept any more,” Horowitz says. “It was, five or six years ago in Houston.”

Max’s Wine Dive is a similarly innovative concept, combining comfort food and a large wine selection with retail sales, providing another revenue stream in addition to regular restaurant returns.

“Our business has grown and continues to grow,” Horowitz says. “We’re in a very fortunate position right now.”

Zeus Mortgage

No. 14 – FAST 100

CEO: Steven Kaufman

Times are tough for the real estate industry. Still, Houston-based Zeus Mortgage has not only survived, but is among Houston’s fastest-growing companies.

According to CEO Steven Kaufman, the formula for success is time-tested.

“The company has loyal relationships with real estate agents, and does a majority of its business locally,” he says. “It’s tough out there if you don’t have established relationships.”

Kaufman founded the business in 2004, and named it after the mythical Greek king of the gods.

“I named it Zeus because the domain was available, and because it was a good, strong name — if not very easy to spell,” he says.

Much of the company’s success today is also attributed to constant staff develop-

ment. Two mandatory “Zeus-storming” meetings per day ensure loan officers to have accurate and up-to-date mortgage and market news about interest rates, market direction and loan options.

“We train our staff every day, and we’re very proud of that,” Kaufman says. “We’re mortgage experts so our customers don’t have to be. We streamline the process and make it easy and understandable.”

In addition to underwriting and supporting community and charitable organizations, the company also joins in a unique charity known as the Fanatical Change Foundation. Donors and volunteers host fundraising events to assist local families that have experienced tragedy.

“A lot of times people donate their money and feel like they don’t know where it goes,” he says. “This organization is amazing because it’s all people who have nothing to gain; it’s all for the good of the community, and it feels phenomenal.”

Nicole Bradford



Enterprise Champion Finalists

• GROWTHFORCE

CEO Stephen King: “We could triple in size right now, but the challenge is customer service, keeping clients happy — so we’ve been very controlled in how we grow our company.”

• EMERGENT INDUSTRIAL SOLUTIONS INC.

Vice president Todd Pencarinha: “EIS buys and sells close to 90 million pounds of products per year that might otherwise be wastes.”

• EXPERTOX INC.

CEO Loretta Anderson: “Toxicology is a big field and a growing field. We look at ourselves as a customized specialty laboratory, and we look at how we can customize and expand for each client.”

• CCS PRESENTATION SYSTEMS INC.

CEO Mark Kalinsky: “CCS has made giving back to the Houston community an integral part of the company’s fabric.”

2009 HOUSTON FAST 100 (Ranked by Percent Revenue Growth 2006 to 2008)

Rank	Name of Company Address Telephone Web Site	Percent Revenue Growth 2006 to 2008	Percent Revenue Growth 2007 to 2008	2008 Revenue	2007 Revenue	2006 Revenue	No. of Employees/ Year Established	Description of Business	Top Local Executive and Title	Principals
1	StarTex Power 3200 Southwest Freeway, Suite 1000, Houston 77027 713-357-2802 www.startexpower.com	552.4%	85.1%	\$137,000,000	\$74,000,000	\$21,000,000	97 2004	retail electric provider	Bob Zlotnik, president and CEO; Marcie Zlotnik, chairman and COO	Marcie Zlotnik, Bob Zlotnik
2	EPC Group.net 5090 Richmond Ave., Suite 336, Houston 77056 888-381-9725 www.epcgroup.net	475.0%	162.9%	\$9,200,000	\$3,500,000	\$1,600,000	52 1999	Microsoft SharePoint consulting services	Errin D. O'Connor, CEO	Errin O'Connor, Carol Donnelly
3	Standing Ovations 1035 Dairy Ashford, Suite 220, Houston 77079 832-448-3311 www.standingovations.net	313.6%	85.8%	\$3,400,000	\$1,830,000	\$822,000	10 1997	provide logoed promotional products	Bob Eisenshtat, president	Bob Eisenshtat
4	Starlight Investments LLC 510 Bering, Suite 300, Houston 77027 713-225-3028 www.starlightinvestments.com	305.9%	1.5%	\$2,756,000	\$2,715,000	\$679,000	3 1999	investment banking	Bryan T. Emerson, managing director	Bryan Emerson
5	Choice Corporate Housing Inc. 6223 Richmond Ave., Suite 103, Houston 77057 713-789-8120 www.chousing.com	300.0%	50.0%	\$12,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$3,000,000	14 2004	corporate housing/ furni- ture sales	Paul M. Sternberg, president and CEO	Paul Strenberg
6	Emergent Industrial Solutions Inc. 16810 Bridle Oak Drive, Cypress 77433 281-213-3822 www.emergentind.com	295.8%	173.9%	\$12,538,000	\$4,577,000	\$3,168,000	9 1997	disposal of hazardous and nonhazardous waste and chemical trading	Paul Ducharme, president	Paul Ducharme, Todd Pencarinha
7	Llewelyn-Davies Sahni 5120 Woodway, Suite 8010, Houston 77056 713-850-1500 www.theldnet.com	282.4%	22.6%	\$6,500,000	\$5,300,000	\$1,700,000	16 1980	architecture planning and design	Rhonda Elsner, director of administration	Randhir Sahni
8	Anslow Bryant Construction Ltd. 840 Gessner, Suite 250, Houston 77024 713-626-1216 www.anslowbryant.com	239.1%	52.0%	\$180,860,000	\$119,000,000	\$53,330,000	100 1995	commercial general contractor	James C. Bryant, president and partner; James D. Anslow, CEO and partner	James D. Anslow, James C. Bryant
9	Wise Men Consultants 1500 S. Dairy Ashford, Suite 285, Houston 77077 281-679-6740 www.wisemen.net	222.7%	64.5%	\$21,300,000	\$12,950,000	\$6,600,000	120 1997	IT and Supplychain solutions company	Juui O. Ahuja, president and CEO	Juui Ahuja, Omprakash Ahuja
10	TMC Orthopedic LP 1000 S. Loop West, Suite 150, Houston 77054 713-669-1800 www.myampute.com	217.4%	65.6%	\$6,932,300	\$4,186,800	\$2,183,800	22 2005	custom prosthetic provider	Joe A Sansone Jr., CEO	Joe Sansone
11	MedSource Consulting Inc. 16902 El Camino Real, Suite 1A, Houston 77058 281-286-2003 www.medsorce.com	213.3%	84.1%	\$7,990,000	\$4,340,000	\$2,550,000	33 1997	contract research organization	Eric J. Lund, president	Eric Lund, Scott Fitzsimmons
12	RigNet Inc. 1880 S. Dairy Ashford, Suite 300, Houston 77077 281-674-0100 www.rignet.com	206.9%	32.8%	\$89,000,000	\$67,000,000	\$29,000,000	174 2000	global provider of remote communications solutions to the energy industry	Mark Slaughter, president and CEO	Mark Slaughter, Marty Jimmerson
13	Lasco Enterprises LLC 114 Gray St., Houston, TX 77002 713-528-9463 www.tastingroomwines.com	200.0%	50.0%	\$9,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$3,000,000	175 2003	restaurants, wine bars	Jerry Lasco, president and CEO	Jerry Lasco, Jonathan Horowitz, Laura Lasco, Jim Maurer, Rick Van Pelt
14	Zeus Mortgage Ltd. 1776 Yorktown, Suite 550, Houston 77056 800-275-9387 www.zeusmortgage.com	200.0%	60.0%	\$4,800,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,600,000	26 2004	residential and commercial lending	Steven Kaufman, president	Steven Kaufman
15	Wells Manufacturing LLC 8444 Rayson Road, Houston 77080 713-690-4204 www.wells-mfg.net	185.9%	48.7%	\$2,373,000	\$1,596,000	\$830,000	8 2002	production machining services	Patsy A. Wells, president	Patsy A. Wells, James T. Wells
16	PreCash Inc. 1800 W. Loop South, Suite 1400, Houston 77027 713-600-2200 www.precash.com	183.3%	19.7%	\$85,000,000	\$71,000,000	\$30,000,000	185 1998	prepaid debit and cash payment services	John D. Chaney, chairman and CEO	John Chaney, Steve Taylor, Matt Callahan, Steve Shaper, Randy Templeton, Cynthia Sparkman, Lee Schoenberger
17	US LED Ltd. 1800 Bering Drive, Suite 700, Houston 77057 713-972-9191 www.usled.com	143.2%	40.0%	\$8,908,000	\$6,365,000	\$3,663,000	21 2001	manufacturer of LED lighting products	Ron Farmer, CEO	Ronald E. Farmer
18	Mark III Systems Inc. 3600 S. Gessner, Suite 170, Houston 77063 713-664-9850 www.markiiisys.com	141.8%	11.5%	\$39,900,000	\$35,800,000	\$16,500,000	18 1995	IBM Premier Business partner	Leslie T. Powell, president	Leslie T. Powell, Ann Wilkerson
19	Additech Inc. 10925 Kinghurst, Suite 500, Houston 77099 281-498-5954 www.additech.com	137.6%	47.4%	\$12,956,000	\$8,791,000	\$5,452,000	35 1989	at-pump interactive digital merchandising	Ralph W. Koehrer, CEO	Ralph W. Koehrer, Andy Austin, Kirt Scott, Jim Timmer
20	SearchServices LLC 6575 W. Loop South, Suite 180, Bellaire 77401 713-838-1600 www.searchsvc.com	112.6%	14.1%	\$6,570,000	\$5,760,000	\$3,090,000	17 2000	recruiting and staffing company	Tony L. Gray, president	Tony Gray, Heather Gray, David Young
21	Kilgore Industries 10050 Houston Oaks Drive, Houston 77064 713-924-4900 www.kilgoreind.com	109.0%	33.8%	\$53,500,000	\$40,000,000	\$25,600,000	325 2000	commercial and medical HVAC and plumbing con- tractor	Jeff S. Kilgore and Ken Kilgore, owners	Jeff Kilgore and Ken Kilgore Jr.
22	Pileco Inc. 111 Berry Road, Houston 77022 713-691-3000 www.pileco.com	107.9%	1.9%	\$91,909,000	\$90,184,000	\$44,200,000	70 1966	foundation construction equipment	Daniel Dragone, president and CEO	Daniel Dragone, Thomas L. Jarboe
23	Anadarko Industries LLC 17625 El Camino Real, Suite 410, Houston 77058 281-286-9200 www.anadarko-industries.com	107.0%	5.5%	\$29,400,000	\$31,100,000	\$14,200,000	152 2003	government services 8(a) contractor	Tom Short, president and CEO	Tom Short, Kenn Hall
24	Gimmel Group Inc. 24 Greenway Plaza, Suite 1000, Houston 77046 713-586-6500 www.gimmel.com	101.8%	51.2%	\$15,655,000	\$10,357,000	\$7,756,910	75 2002	enterprise content manage- ment consulting services	David Quackenbush, president	K. David Quackenbush, Mike Alsop Cynthia Wood, Danae Stephenson, Nancy Bratic
25	The Common Source LP 14500 North Freeway, Houston 77090 281-260-9220 www.commonsource.com	100.1%	11.8%	\$3,028,000	\$2,709,000	\$1,513,000	11 1997	litigation support and docu- ment management	L. Ann Zdansky, president and CEO	L. Ann Zdansky

When tied by revenue growth, secondary criteria is 2008 revenue.
Senior Researcher: Nicole Ferweda.

Source: Questionnaires.
(Continued)