

Trident Marketing Moves Into New Home



Trident Marketing CEO Steven Baldelli stands in the company's spacious, modern call center.

By [Ted M. Natt Jr.](#)

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Five years after acquiring the property, Trident Marketing has finally moved into the former Winn-Dixie shopping center on U.S. 1 in Southern Pines.

Trident will showcase its seven-figure renovation of the property at a private open house Thursday.

"It wasn't necessary to bring in giant crews and get it done instantaneously," CEO Steven Baldelli says. "Timing is everything."

The economic downturn slowed Trident's progress, but Baldelli is proud of the fact that the company used local contractors for about 70 percent of the work.

"Using local people gave us the flexibility to do it right," he says.

Trident, which Baldelli co-founded in 1986, started with the acquisition of Sycamore Lodge Resort, an

upscale RV park and campground nestled on 194 acres near Jackson Springs. Sycamore Lodge and three other RV resorts in Ohio and Pennsylvania are operated by the company's Travel Resorts of America subsidiary.

"The resort business is steady Eddie," Baldelli says.

Trident's other subsidiaries include Direct Sat TV, which acquires customers for Direct TV; Direct Sat Broadband, which acquires Internet customers for HughesNet and CLEAR; Advanced Direct Security, which acquires customers for ADT; and Service Valet, which acquires customers for N.E.W. Customer Service Companies.

"We have 30,000 telephone lines coming in here, because we have that many marketing programs going on at the same time," Baldelli says. "The biggest cost for us is marketing — getting that phone to ring."

Directing all of those calls to the appropriate sales agent is a \$1 million data warehouse appliance that has a predicted analytics platform.

"The heart of what we do is technology," Baldelli says. "It makes us competitive in a tough space. We measure everything on a more granular level than our competitors.

"We live on tighter margins than they live on, so we would not be able to compete without our technology."

Trident has almost 400 workers, making the company one of Moore County's largest private employers. It opened a second call center in Cary last year, and has made the list of Inc. magazine's 5,000 fastest-growing private companies in the United States the past three years.

"It takes everyone to make this place tick," Baldelli says.

"Everyone" includes his wife, Susan, president of Trident Designs, which did the lion's share of the interior design in the new space.

"We really wanted a modern feel where people felt like they were walking into a high-tech space," Susan says.

The 43,000-square-foot, energy-efficient building was stripped to its original walls before work began in April 2010.

"We wanted it to be different from anything else in the market. It's hard to make something new and different if you don't gut it," Susan says.

Trident occupied 12,500 square feet of space at 340 Commerce Avenue in Southern Pines before moving into its renovated space on U.S. 1 last July. The company currently occupies 35,900 square feet in the new location, with room for an additional 7,100 square feet.

A portion of the renovation cost was offset by a \$240,000 grant that Trident received in August 2010 from the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center's Building Reuse & Restorations grant program.

The money helped renovate a 22,300-square-foot portion of the total space. Trident committed to creating 24 new full-time jobs within two years of the grant reward.

"We want to consolidate all of our operations here, then rent the other commercial space in the shopping

center,” Susan says. “Phases I and II are done. We’ll start Phase III in the fourth quarter of 2012.”

She adds that the shopping center will soon be called The Plaza at Poplar.

Patrick Coughlin, president and CEO of the Moore County Chamber of Commerce, is “thrilled” that the space is occupied again.

“That building was empty for quite some time,” Coughlin says. “This is a perfect case of a company looking at the assets in a community and taking advantage of an existing asset. I think it’s a real testament to Trident being conscious of reusing the assets that were already here.”

Coughlin adds that he hopes the company’s old office space can be put to good use by a new tenant or tenants.

“Trident started out small and outgrew its space,” he says. “It would be nice if we can do it again.”

Meanwhile, Trident is hosting a private ribbon cutting and open house Thursday that will be catered by Elliott’s on Linden.

“I think we’re going to get a turnout. I hope so,” Susan says.

Guests will be able to tour the building, which includes a new outdoor patio with seating.

“All of the exterior landscaping was coordinated with the rebuild,” Susan adds. “We’re really thrilled with the way things turned out.”

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