

# Member news & Notes

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### Advanced Networking



» Advanced Networking has found success in a field where many large and small companies have failed. The company specializes in selling, installing, and supporting business telephone systems. It was founded by its president, Rik Raphael in 1987. It started as a wiring company that installed voice cabling for local interconnects. They then expanded to installing and programming phone systems, which earned them projects coming with the State of Delaware, Diamond State Telephone and many other local businesses. Today nearly all their customers are within 100 miles of Wilmington, but some are up and down the East Coast, and in Texas, California and Illinois, as well.

Since Delaware is such a tight-knit community, word travels fast – good or bad. Advanced Networking recognized from the start that their reputation was on the line with every job. Many new clients, both then and now, are referrals from existing customers and local IT companies. It is our commitment to our customers and ability to adapt to the evolution of our industry that has kept us in business.

Over the years, business telephone systems have changed from mechanical to electro-mechanical to digital to Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), with many hybrids along the way. When we lost a bid to job to supply a “by the mailbox” rental voicemail product in the early 90s, we decided to build our own. The result was a huge success. Customers appreciated that it did much more at a lower expense. We later

built an Interactive Voice Response system for a local nonprofit to provide their callers with self-help medical information. This service gave the caller hundreds of pre-recorded message prompts in either English or Spanish. We also built a customized on-call emergency notification system for a multi-state waterproofing company. Our solution enabled the company’s clients to connect with the appropriate on-call technician by using their zip code.

“When a customer has a need, we strive to come up with a practical, economical, and dependable solution using products and services that are readily available and that we can support. This is our greatest strength,” said Raphael.

Advanced Networking does its due-diligence to analyze projects and show customers projected expenses using our solution. In most cases, the cost is less than what they used to spend. When it’s not, the benefits and security of our solution justify the difference. Other companies might save you money, but will they meet you in person at your office? Will they be available after normal hours or on a weekend? Can you get a person who can help you on the first phone call? With us, the answer is yes.

“Many customers have requested programming changes after hours and have been surprised and grateful when they get a response that the work has been completed, and at no charge, said Raphael. “That just doesn’t happen with most of our competition. Their appreciation is very gratifying.”

## Chairman’s Message

BY GARY STOCKBRIDGE

» Small businesses are a foundational element in our state economy, as well a pivotal part of our chamber membership. I am thrilled that we are celebrating our 20th year recognizing their achievements through the Superstars in Business Award. Too often, we miss opportunities to step back and acknowledge our successes, but these awards provide us a moment to pause every year to recognize small businesses, as well as nonprofits, and applaud the entire small business community across the state.



More than half of all new jobs come from small businesses. At the state chamber, we know it’s critical that we foster a supportive business community for these organizations – not only to maintain job growth but also to drive innovation and progress in our economy. Thanks to the leadership of Martha Gilman and the help of our planning and selection committees, the Superstars in Business Award continues to promote a positive environment for small businesses. Through this annual award, we have honored 76 organizations for their outstanding achievements, demonstrating to our small businesses that we value them, we support them, and we want them to succeed.