

# St. Louis Small Business Monthly

*The Source for Business Owners*

## Entrepreneur Saves Struggling Company Critique Personnel Service Now Employs More Than 50

by Ron Ameln

A call for help from his ex-wife led to the American Dream for Clyde Jeans, owner of Critique Personnel Service.

Last July, Jeans' ex-wife, who worked for a national personnel company, called and asked the long-time Memphis resident if he would venture to St. Louis to help the company's floundering St. Louis operation. As a long-time sales professional, Jeans thought it would be a great opportunity.

"I agreed to go to St. Louis for about six months," Jeans said. "It was just going to be a temporary thing to help increase sales." At the time, the company had hit rock bottom. It had only a few office personnel and only a few workers in the field.

While Jeans was in town solving the company's problems, bad news came crashing down on the business. The news: The parent company had been purchased by an Arkansas firm, and the St. Louis office was closing.

"It was horrible timing," Jeans said. "We were starting to turn things around. We had about eight people out on assignment at that time.

"These people depended on me to keep this business going. I wasn't ready to give it up."

Jeans decided to take the plunge and become an entrepreneur. What began as a six-month consulting job turned into a new business. He bought the office equipment from

the Arkansas company, kept the employees and opened Critique Personnel Service in March.

Critique Personnel Service is a full-service temporary agency, offering temporary and temp-to-perm assignments for everything from light industrial to clerical.

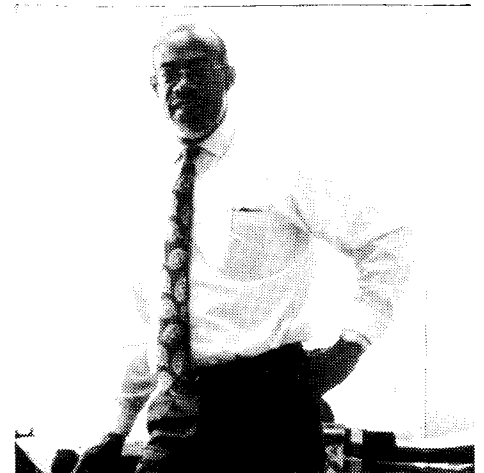
In just five months, Jeans has taken the company to new heights. When he began the firm, it had only eight workers in the field. Today, it has over 50.

"We gained our customers because we offer a competitive price, and we place reliable, quality people," Jeans said. "Ninety-nine percent of the time our prices beat our competition."

Jeans turned the company around by simply asking clients for the opportunity to prove Critique could serve their needs. "We started out slow," he said. "We asked clients for a chance to place one or two individuals within the company. Once we got that chance, we proved we could provide quality people at a competitive price."

If clients are not satisfied with their temporaries, Jeans reacts quickly. "If they are not satisfied, we will replace that employee until they are satisfied."

Jeans is constantly striving to satisfy his customers. Critique calls each client to find out if he or she is satisfied with the service and to



*Down on its luck and ready to close its doors, a local temporary agency found new life, thanks to Clyde Jeans. Today, Critique Personnel Service employs more than 50.*

ask what else can be done to help them. A questionnaire is also sent to each client.

"We do a lot of listening," Jeans said. "We are constantly striving to meet our clients' needs."

Although he had to uproot his family and move to St. Louis, Jeans has no regrets about his entrepreneurial venture.

"We've got over 50 employed now," Jeans said. "If I didn't stay here, maybe they wouldn't have jobs right now. I guess there is a reason for everything. I guess that's the reason I'm here."