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## Envision Creative's revenue growth bolstered by new clients

Austin Business Journal - by [Sandra Zaragoza](#) ABJ Staff

Envision Creative Group celebrated its move into its downtown Austin office last week, albeit a little late.

The 6-year-old boutique marketing agency moved into its second-floor space at 213 W. Fourth St. almost a year ago, but it took longer than expected to put the office together.

"We are our own worst clients. We always focus on our clients' project first, and then say we'll get around to this stuff," says David Smith, president of Envision.

Considering it's attracted a few new clients lately, including upscale homebuilder Heyl Homes, CACH Capital Management LLC and Elite Professionals magazine, the timing for a grand opening couldn't be better.

Envision -- whose services include marketing, design, consulting and photography -- is on track to generate about \$600,000 in revenue this year, up from \$320,000 in 2006.

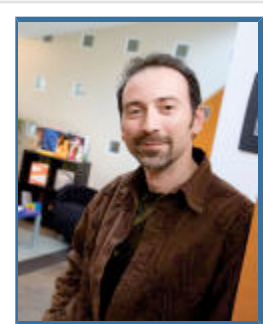
Driving that growth at the four-person agency is a client-turned-agency mentality and a streamlined agency model.

Before launching Envision, Smith was a marketer for a technology company -- a sensibility he applies to his work with clients.

"I understand them because six years ago I was in their shoes," Smith says. "I was a marketing director looking for someone to make me the hero, to solve my problems, not for someone that would make me justify to my boss why things are going wrong and I'm spending more than I should."

"We try to alleviate that way ahead of time," Smith says.

Stephanie Craft, president of the American Marketing Association's Austin chapter, says that



Brett Buchanan

David Smith, president of Envision Creative Group, says his experience as an in-house marketing professional helps him understand and better serve clients.

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Smith's background gives him an advantage.

"It gives him a perspective that's unique, and [gives him] more knowledge to address a client's needs," Craft says.

In creating Envision, Smith decided that he wanted to keep the agency small and overhead low by doing everything it could in-house, and using freelancers on an as-needed basis.

Envision also added photography services, offering everything from corporate headshots to on-location photography.

"We decided that we could save a lot of money for ourselves and our clients if we brought photography in-house," Smith says.

That business formula has worked well for Envision, says Stephanie Silver, director of sales for Envision.

"We don't have to have several layers of expertise at all times. And that helps keep our costs down, which helps keep the costs we charge our clients low," Silver says.

Craft says there are challenges to outsourcing talent.

"One of the challenges to having a virtual office is to vet [freelancers] because you are introducing them to the equation with your name attached," Craft says.

Smith says he plans to keep the agency compact, while growing its customer base.

The agency's work has been primarily business-to-business, but clients like Mangia Pizza are helping to attract more business-to-consumer accounts, Smith says.

"We want to really have a presence in Austin," Smith says. "One of my big objectives is to get [repeat project] clients and establish relationships."

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