

## PACESETTERS: IST Management Services Inc. is one of Atlanta's 50 fastest-growing private companies

By Thornton Kennedy,  
Industry Focus Editor

The 2009 Atlanta Business Chronicle Pacesetters have more than earned their stripes.

In the midst of an economic collapse, these companies found a way to grow by a minimum of 50 percent-plus during the last two years. All of these companies also grew their staffs over the same time frame. Their successes and their secrets are contained in these pages.

In order to qualify, the company had to be privately owned, based in the 20-county metro Atlanta area and not be a subsidiary of another company. It has to have been established in the first quarter of 2006 or earlier, and to have had 2008 revenue between \$1 million and \$300 million.

The companies are ranked according to a growth index formula, which is used to even the field among companies of different sizes. The revenue and employee growth indexes are the percent change from 2006 through 2008 multiplied by the absolute change for the same years. A company's average employee or revenue growth index is the growth index divided by the average growth index of all companies that qualify. The weighted average growth index is a company's average employee index score plus its average revenue index score. Employee growth was weighted 40 percent and revenue growth was weighted 60 percent.



**PACESETTER:** IST's founder, President & CEO, Hal Blackman.



Atlanta-based IST Management Services, Inc. has grown by 30 percent each year while tripling the number of employees.

Keeping those employees content is one of the reasons for the facilities management company's success. Founder, President & CEO invented his own currency to keep his team motivated.

"Blackman Bucks" are an employee recognition program in which employees earn "bucks" for doing excellent work. Blackman Bucks can be redeemed four times per year through an online prize bidding system. IST was awarded the 2007 Professional Excellence award by the Society for Human Resource Management in Atlanta.

The Atlanta-based company, which provides onsite mail and copy facilities management services and electronic document management software, has developed proprietary software that sorts mail, tracks packages, and manages and transforms human resources software. The latter, called "DocStor," automatically tracks missing and expiring forms, and sends email alerts to employees when it finds something amiss.

Besides its products and services, IST achieved growth through expanding its sales force, empowering its employees and continually retooling its proprietary software. IST is now the largest privately held facilities management company, that provides on-site document management services, in the country.

### 27 IST MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC.

Atlanta-based IST Management Services Inc. has grown by 30 percent each year while tripling the number of employees.

Keeping those employees content is one of the reasons for the facilities management company's success. Founder, President and CEO Hal Blackman invented his own currency to keep his team motivated.

"Blackman bucks" are an employee recognition program in which employees earn "bucks" for doing excellent work. Blackman bucks can be redeemed four times a year through an online prize-bidding system. IST was awarded the 2007 Professional Excellence award by the Society for Human Resource Management in Atlanta.

The Atlanta-based company, which provides on-site mail and copy facilities management services and electronic document management software, is developing proprietary software that sorts mail, tracks packages, and manages and transforms human resources software. The latter, called "Docstor," automatically tracks missing and expiring forms, and sends e-mail alerts to employees when it finds something amiss.

Besides its products and services, IST achieved growth through expanding its workforce at a risky time and cutting costs. In the economic wake of Sept. 11, 2001, Blackman expanded the sales force, which IST says has led to the company being in the black during the current recession.

— All profiles compiled by Katie Fincher