

# Small Business Spotlight: DIAMOND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, LLC

BY JULIE POUCHER HARBIN

Diamond Environmental Services, LLC is a portable services company that rents out and services portable restrooms and sinks at construction sites, for special events, and at permanent locations.

The company acquired the San Diego division of Portosan Co., LLC, called Portosan of San Diego, on Dec. 1. Portosan of San Diego, at half the size of Diamond, was one of its biggest competitors, according to owner Eric de Jong. Diamond will take over Portosan's San Diego routes.

Diamond's chief competitors are now Spanky's Portable Services and Waste Management of San Diego.

## RESUME

Name: Eric de Jong.

Title: Owner.

Company: Diamond Environmental Services, LLC.

Address: 605 E. Mission Road, San Marcos, 92069.

Phone: (760) 744-7191.

Founded: Feb.1, 1998.

Prior experience: Sales manager of Coast Waste Management of Carlsbad, a solid waste and recycling company.

Source of start-up capital: \$250,000 personal funds and \$250,000 family loan.

2003 revenue: \$5,100,000.

Number of employees: 40.

Web site: ([www.diamondprovides.com](http://www.diamondprovides.com)).

## BACKGROUND

Born: Sept. 21, 1966, Escondido.

Education: High school.

Residence: San Marcos.

Family: Wife, Silva; three children: Ella, 10, Robert, 9, and Niels, 6.

Hobbies: Hiking with family, fishing, and dirt biking.

## JUDGMENT CALLS

Reason for starting business: Always wanted to start my own business, and this type of business has similar clientele to the solid waste industry (construction, city contracts, and special events).

How I plan to grow the business: Aggressive sales, service, and marketing. We will continue to grow and expand in Ramona, Julian, and the East County.

Biggest plus of business ownership: Personal satisfaction through growth and keeping continual growth in our customer base.

Biggest drawback: Workers' compensation and health insurance; responsibilities 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Biggest business strength: An awesome core group of individuals helping lead the change in customer service.

Biggest business weakness: Hiring and retaining drivers to service portable restrooms, grease interceptors, and septic tanks.

Biggest risk: Construction could slow down some day in Southern California.

Smartest business decision: Starting small and learning all aspects of business and industry, and learning to take certain risks on service and supplies which has helped us surpass our competition (such as the NFL Experience, and the firestorm of 2003).

Biggest business mistake: None at this time.

Toughest career decision: To quit working for our family-owned solid waste company and start my own business.

Biggest ongoing challenge: Hiring and training or convincing employees to take management positions.

## DREAMS

Goals yet to be achieved: To continue growing and have the right management staff in place to allow for a 40-hour workweek.

My five-year business plan: To be the leading portable restroom facility provider for special events in the San Diego County area.

I would sell my business only if: My health was at risk.

## PHILOSOPHY

Guiding principles: Same as our company motto, which is "simplicity, reliability, and personal attention." The more you put into it, the more you get out of it.

My mentors: Business mentors are: (1) our family attorney, Bruce White of White and Bright; and (2) my father, Arie de Jong.

The most important part of my business: Employees.

My business works best when: I delegate and continue doing what I do best, which is finding more business opportunities.

Important lessons learned: Let your managers do the job they are hired to do; learning to delegate.

Advice for those looking to go into business: Know the competition, know your banker, have a good accountant, have a good attorney, hire the right people, and learn as much as possible about the industry you want to get into.