

Suzanne McGann

President and owner, Voyageur Information Technology

SUZANNE MCGANN SPEAKS AS ONE accustomed to punctuating her career with sharp right turns every now and again. A former theology student, she re-envisioned herself as a technology worker and then as the owner of a growing Web-development business.

She wouldn't have it any other way.

"I've made a couple choices that have really pivoted things for me," she said. "It provides a reinvestment and keeps me fresh. ... I'd advise other women to always stay open to new ideas."

Today, McGann is the president and owner of Voyageur I.T., a Web-development and hosting firm.

She has been with Voyageur — the name plainly suits her — since 2000, when she became a project manager after working with the company on a successful site for her previous employer, staffing firm Jeane Thorne Inc.

"Eventually I moved into sales, then acquired a bit of ownership and acquired more and more," until she was the chief owner," she said.

The company, which works with small- and mid-sized clients such as Minnesota Bound and Buffalo Wild Wings, survived the tech downturn relatively smoothly and is now expanding into its first out-of-state office, in Denver.

McGann said the new office had been in

the planning stages for 18 months, and she was confident it would work out well.

Others agreed, saying McGann had a knack for careful preparation.

"Suzanne is a very good fiscal manager, and she looked at Denver from all the angles," said Jennifer Brigham, of the staffing group the Brigham Group Inc., who knows McGann through the National Association of Women Business Owners and the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce. "She'll do very well."

The daughter of a Marine officer, McGann was born in Hawaii and grew up moving to several states. She came to the Twin Cities not for business, but for a higher calling, enrolling in a seminary to pursue a master's degree in Jewish theology.

"I figured I'd do something theological after school," she said, and for a time worked for nonprofit programs at the University of Minnesota's campus ministry.

There, she discovered a liking and aptitude for the technical side of the business world. Her husband, who had followed her to Minnesota, encouraged her to try the corporate world, and she went to Jeane Thorne.

There, she said, "I had a lot of autonomy and realized I really enjoyed marketing," she said. She was involved in developing an award-winning Web site for the firm, which brought her into contact with Voyageur.

Looking back, McGann said that all aspects



of her career have helped her succeed.

"The seminary definitely helped," she said. "There was a lot of emphasis on listening well to people; it's almost like a counselor's background."

She doesn't plan another sharp turn in the near term, however; she thinks that Voyageur's expansion will provide the new challenges she craves.

BY MARK REILLY, SENIOR REPORTER