

Staying On Line

**VOYAGEUR IT NOT ONLY BUILDS WEB SITES—IT
CREATES MARKETING PLANS FOR THEM.**



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These days, it's not that difficult to get a Web site up and running. And it's not too hard to find a reputable design firm to make your site look nice. But how do you get people to visit?

That's how a small but fast-growing St. Paul-based Web design firm is setting itself apart in a crowded business. Voyageur IT does Web site design, development, and hosting, along with e-commerce development, e-mail marketing, and other services for a client

list that includes Buffalo Wild Wings and the Minnesota Science Museum. It also develops Web marketing plans that help clients get their sites noticed.

Voyageur IT has been getting some notice itself. The company has won a number of awards—in April, Suzanne McGann, the company's president and majority owner, was named Young Business Woman of the Year by the National Association of Women Business Owners. McGann came to the company as a project man-

ager in 1999. Since she took over ownership two years ago, Voyageur IT has enjoyed consistent revenue growth—it had revenues of \$300,000 in 2004 and is trending toward 24 percent growth this year. Its client retention rate is 92 percent, and it recently opened a satellite office in Denver, which is run by McGann's former boss, Voyageur IT founder David Peterson. The firm now relies entirely on incoming queries and referrals.

McGann says that one factor in the company's success is the appealing but streamlined nature of its Web content. Voyageur's sites are designed for fast load time and ease of use. In order to maintain efficient load time, developers size the most important images—the ones critical to theme and usability—so that they'll load first.

Voyageur IT's Web marketing services focus on two areas: search engine positioning and building site "popularity" (yes, it's an IT industry term). Positioning involves getting a client's name as high in a search engine's "results" as possible when keywords are entered. Building popularity involves finding other sites that will link to the client's, thus driving more traffic there.

McGann observes that while a business can build its own site, "it might not get constructed and maintained the way they want. That's where specialists like us come in." ■

—Dan Heilman