

● How I Did It CEOs Share Their Secrets of Explosive Growth



Inc.

The Handbook of the American Entrepreneur

SPECIAL ISSUE

**AMERICA'S
FASTEST
GROWING
PRIVATE
COMPANIES**

500

MEET THE BEST

20,128.9% Growth

MemberHealth

5,326 Jobs Created

Noble Investment Group

\$1.6 Billion Annual Revenue

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AND 497 OTHER PROFILES OF SUCCESS

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Introducing the...

Inc. 5,000

That's the Inc. 500 plus 4,500 new fast-growing companies

FOR 25 YEARS, INC. HAS BEEN ranking the 500 fastest-growing private companies in America. This year we've gone further: We've expanded the list tenfold, to create the first-ever Inc. 5,000. It took an army of editors, reporters, and interns almost a full year to locate these private companies, solicit their applications, evaluate their eligibility, verify their financial data, and interview their leaders. Dozens of business organizations and trade associations pitched in, helping us identify thousands of companies and persuade them to tell us about themselves.

In the Inc. 5,000, you'll find the most comprehensive look ever at the most important part of the economy—the entrepreneurial part. For one thing, the Inc. 5,000 catches businesses that are too big to grow at the pace required to make the Inc. 500. The median revenue growth of the Inc. 5,000 companies between 2003 and 2006—141 percent—is nevertheless pretty impressive, and some of them are huge. Brightstar, for example, is a former Inc. 500 wireless product distributor that took in \$3.6 billion last year. ABC Supply, another former Inc. 500 company, is headed by Inc.'s 2006 Entrepreneur of the Year, Ken Hendricks. Now the nation's largest whole-

sale distributor of roofing, siding, and gutters, ABC generated almost \$3 billion in revenue in 2006. And then there's Related Companies, a New York real estate firm that increased its revenue by more than \$2 billion between 2003 and 2006. Indeed, the Inc. 5,000 represents an elite, a mere sliver of the more than five million companies in the United States that have employees.

To view the complete results of this effort, head to Inc.com, where you'll be able to scan profiles of the entire Inc. 5,000, as well as see lists of the fastest-growing companies by industry and region. Plus, you'll be able to sort the data according to your own parameters. Meanwhile, we surveyed the Inc. 5,000 CEOs (2,710 responded). This four-page gatefold provides a taste of what we've learned—who these CEOs are, what kinds of companies they've founded, and what tactics they've deployed to succeed. In the months and years ahead, we will continue to investigate these companies in ways that will give our readers the most detailed look available at entrepreneurial America as a whole and in its numerous individual variations. —Jim Melloan

The Inc. 5,000 at a glance

Total Revenue
\$199.58 billion

Median Revenue
\$9.4 million

Total Employment (estimated)
942,224

Median Growth Rate
141.4%

Median Number of Employees
47

No. 4,526 Progressive Design Playgrounds

Oceanside, CA

Year	2007
Industry	Manufacturing
Founded	1990
Growth	42.4%
2003 Revenue	\$3.3 million
2006 Revenue	\$4.7 million
Employees	20
Website	www.pdplay.com

- Ranked No. 73 in the [Top Companies in San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA](#)

What it does: Manufactures commercial playgrounds from environmentally-friendly materials, including recycled plastic and tires. Customers include schools, churches and daycare centers.

Why it's growing: Word of mouth in an extremely small industry.

What's noteworthy: The company switched from manufacturing its products from wood to more durable and environmentally-friendly recycled plastic in the mid-1990s.

Read this company's extended profile when the [IncBizNet](#) launches in early October.

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