

Firm helps clients keep thousands of documents at their fingertips

By **FRANK VINLUAN**
REGISTER BUSINESS WRITER

Most people can relate to misplacing a few papers on their desks. Now imagine trying to keep 7,000 documents straight. If you need help with the latter, Suzanne Guess might be the person for you.

Guess, 43, is a founder and owner of 210 Communications, a Des Moines company that helps other companies manage their documents and information. Sometimes the solution she offers is a training manual. Sometimes it's documentation posted as online help. Sometimes it's moving paper-based data into a digital format.

In the case of the company trying to keep track of 7,000 documents, 210 Communications implemented a new software system designed to manage all of the documents.

"It's updated now; it's current. They know where it is; they know where they can search for it," Guess said.

Guess does not consider herself a technology person. Technology savvy, she said, was an acquired skill. She comes to the technology world with a teaching background. Guess taught English at Des Moines Area Community College and Iowa State University for about 15 years.

Guess left teaching in 2000 for a job doing technical writing for American Republic Insurance Company. Guess took on bigger projects and she and a colleague eventually decided to leave to start their own business.

"We decided we wanted to branch out on our own and do the work that we knew how to do and do it the best way we knew how to do it," she said.

They founded 210 Communications in March 2005. The former colleague who started 210 Communications with Guess no longer works for the company.

The business of managing



FRANK VINLUAN/THE REGISTER

Suzanne Guess, owner of 210 Communications, stands next to a framed picture of an old typewriter keyboard hanging in her office. She said the picture symbolizes one of her passions: writing. Her company helps other companies manage their documents and information.

documents is a growing, according to data from AIIM, a Silver Spring, Md. group for companies in the document management industry. Results of an industry survey from last fall show that revenues and the customer base are both growing.

Health care in particular is one sector showing increasing demand for document management, according to the AIIM data. Banking, insurance and manufacturing are also showing strong demand.

Guess declined to identify her clients. She said the company started with small businesses, but has since done work for large corporations as well. But for businesses of all sizes, she emphasizes the importance of knowing how to find what you need when you need it.

In the event of a disaster,

210 Communications

FIND IT AT: 506 Third St, Des Moines; www.210comm.net.

OWNER: Suzanne Guess

WHAT THEY DO: Help businesses manage internal documents and company information.

EXPECT TO PAY: Cost varies. Writing a resume costs about \$85; implementing a document management software system can cost \$100,000.

OF NOTE: The company name comes from the number of an old apartment where Guess once lived.

for example, access to the information can mean the difference between picking up where the business left off or starting from scratch.

Despite the computerization of document management, Guess still works with words on a regular basis. Sometimes she writes or edits manuals.

She will also work on resumes. Guess said she loves working with words. Although her roots were in teaching, she said she relishes her new career path.

"It is a challenge, I learn something new every single day," she said.

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