

# Business Partner offers one-stop marketing

By Ray Tuttle  
Business Writer

The cell phone chirped and Tim Airhart stepped away to answer yet another call — another interruption at the end of an already hectic day.

But, Airhart didn't mind. He expected it as he attended to the dozens of details that come with opening a new undertaking.

Airhart is the franchise owner of Business Partner of Tulsa, which labels itself a "one-stop service-oriented operation" offering marketing and advertising solutions to small business owners. "They need Polo shirts, now," Airhart told Tammy Marshall, the graphic artist, and Bryan Dirks, account manager — the rest of the team Airhart has assembled.

The customer was the first walk in at the storefront in the KingsPointe Center, 61st Street and Yale Avenue.

"He just looked us up and walked in," Airhart said, chuckling. "First he needed stationary. We delivered that today and now he needs shirts."

Airhart has a lot to smile about.

Cut loose from telecom giant MCI WorldCom after a 19-year career, Airhart had moved through management to become director of engineering at WorldCom's Cherokee site. He became another statistic once the company filed bankruptcy and changed its name to MCI. At that point, he examined his options.



**ONE-STOP MARKETING – Business Partner bills itself as a motherlode of business supplies. It offers to create everything from business cards to trade show squeeze toys, from large-scale graphics to shirts, said owner Tim Airhart, right. With Airhart are account manager Bryan Dirks, left, and graphic artist Tammy Marshall, center.**

"There were opportunities at franchising, buying an existing business. I looked at a boot strap — launching a start-up."

What attracted him to Business Partner was the universality of the operation. "This is not tied to just one industry," he said. "Plus, there is a fun part, a creative aspect to this. You start with an idea and make something of it."

After nearly two decades in the meat-grinder atmosphere of the corporate

world, Airhart sees his current venture as a breath of fresh air.

While Business Partner offers business consulting and marketing expertise — there is a lot more to the enterprise than just printing and copying services.

"It's like a copy shop on steroids," Dirks said, with a laugh.

That has become as much of the tag line as the corporate-inspired "one-stop marketing."

Business Partner offers business people marketing and advertising services, shipping, graphic design, color posters, binding, signs, tradeshow displays, website design, video production and multimedia specialties.

It is about branding, Dirks said.

A business needs to begin by branding itself and it needs that look and feel to carry over consistently, Dirks said. "It involves developing a logo, which then can be added to business cards, printed materials, letterhead, envelopes and apparel," he said.

Previously, Dirks and Marshall worked for a large copy shop franchise. Both see the potential in Business Partner. "When I was there, I would get all these questions for these things," Dirks said, related to marketing. "So, whenever I heard of this business, I discovered it was a one-stop shop. For a smaller business to be able to grow, we do everything for them. Or, for a large business, we can outsource for them."

The two things that Airhart liked about the franchise was the showroom atmosphere where people actually can see several ad specialties and the convenience.

"It is not like someone working out of garage or an industrial address that is hard to find."