

Steven Bankler, CPA

Client Spotlight

ais

leaders in mobile imaging

When Staff Sgt. Philip Rathbun added an MBA to his academic repertoire of a Bachelor of Science degree in Healthcare Management, an Associate of Science degree in Radiologic Technology, and three professional “Registered” designations as Radiology Technologist, Ultrasound Technologist and Vascular Specialist, he became the most educated E-5 in the U.S. Air Force—which had no openings at the time for commissioned officers in hospital administration and no opportunities for someone with his education.

Packing an insatiable appetite for healthcare and an entrepreneurial spirit, Phil left active duty in 1985 to start his own business. He began Advanced Imaging Services Inc. part-time while working for an ultrasound

computer technology firm, where he learned the intricacies and economics of strategic sales and marketing. In 1992, Phil devoted himself full-time to AIS.

At first, his company consisted of two people—Phil and one partner—who provided mobile X-ray and ultrasound services using their families’ vehicles. While longstanding portable X-ray companies have a poor survival rate as businesses, AIS in contrast has proven itself to be an anomaly.

AIS is a mobile radiology imaging services company that harnesses the market by catering to immobile patients of nursing homes, acute-care hospitals, home healthcare agencies, assisted-living facilities and rehabilitation centers in South Central Texas.

“Being No. 1 was the only option,” Phil says. “Just being fast enough or mobile was not good enough. From the start, I moved to establish our brand far beyond just ‘portable X-ray.’”

With a 15-vehicle fleet and a staff of 26, AIS provides 40 different kinds of diagnostic X-rays, 15 varieties of vascular Doppler’s, 11 types of diagnostic ultrasound, and seven sorts of cardiac testing as well as bone density

exams, radiology duplication services and its latest offering—preventive “Save-a-Life Screenings.”

The company claims 68 percent market share for locally owned nursing homes and 80 percent market share for the broader range of immobile patient facilities in an area that spans from north of Austin to south of Pearsall, and AIS is 30 percent to 60 percent faster than its competition.

Contributing key success factors are AIS’ high-tech equipment, expert technicians, prompt response and a focus on both patient and client. In fact, some vans and trucks are equipped with digital gadgets that read and electronically send X-ray images via laptop to patients’ radiologists, who dictate the images and forward to the

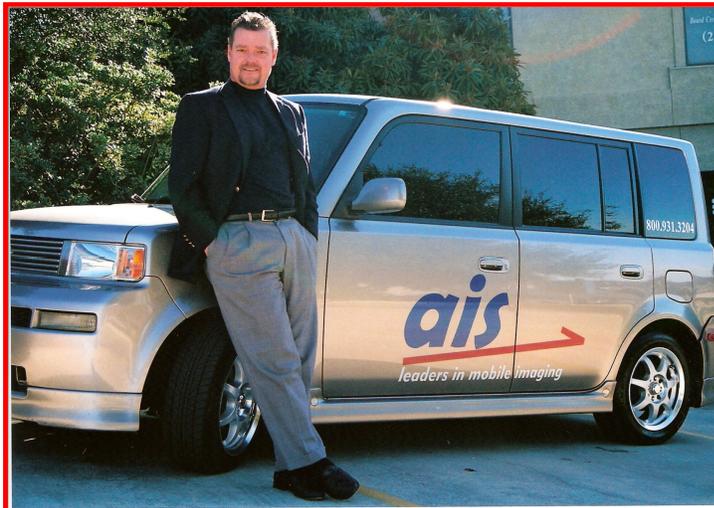
client. All technicians have pagers, cell phones and laptops. “From the client’s call to final report, communication is key—we stay in touch and follow through,” Phil says.

Five years ago, Phil met Steven Bankler when Steven’s brother facilitated a voluntary group of business owners from a cross-section of industries who serve as trusted counsel to other business owners. “Steve gets excited about business and about my business,” Phil says. “He likes to dig—

backwards and forwards. He advises me on my company’s structure, and he and my attorney worked together to set up the business entities that offered the best tax advantages as well as protections for my business and family.

“Steve is expensive, but not as much as a cheaper accountant who offers no business strategies. Following his recommendations more than offsets his fees. In the healthcare field, cutting corners is not worth the risk. Steve knows the rules. He can read through 100,000 pages, and tell me what I can and cannot do. He gives me ethical advice and serves as a guide. Running a business can be a lonely thing, but I can talk to Steve.”

Advanced Imaging Services is located in San Antonio at 5501 Grissom Rd, Suite 101. Find out more by calling (210) 684-0409 or visit www.aisxray.com.



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