

Virtual office space - for rent

Workers at home, on road given option

David Peregrino
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Intelligent Office Details

- Intelligent Office at 7362 Remcon Circle offers "virtual office" services for business people who spend most of their time on the road or working out of their homes. Membership packages cost about \$95 to \$250 a month and more, depending on the range of services needed.
- Information: (915)842-8400 or visit <http://www.intelligentoffice.com> or <http://www.tioelp.alhu.com>

El Paso business owners who spend more time behind the wheel than behind a desk now have a new way of offering customer service with a professional and upscale touch.

Texas' first Intelligent Office franchise has opened on the city's West Side, offering "virtual offices" and hourly daily office and conference space for businesses that don't want or need to invest in their own brick-and-mortar storefronts.

The virtual office concept also is attractive for people who work out of their homes, said Intelligent Office sales coordinator Dax Hughes.

Adrian Michel, left, and Dax Hughes demonstrate with telesecretary Cynthia Ovalle, how Intelligent Office, at 7362 Remcon Circle, works for clients who do not have an office there but have their phone calls directed there first.

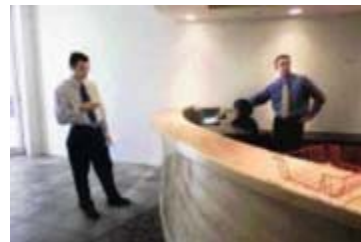


Photo by Linda Stelter, El Paso Times

"A 'telesecretary' answers all phone calls in your company's name," Hughes said. "Our 'follow-me' communications system allows us to transfer calls to you, no matter where you are -- in your home office or out on the golf course. Your client doesn't have to know that you work out of your home."

Intelligent Office offers numerous other services, including a physical address for receiving and sending mail, high-speed Internet access, copy and fax machines and pay-by-the-hour offices and conference rooms.

Monthly membership packages range from about \$95 to \$250 and up, depending on what a business needs. Members can access the office 24 hours a day, seven days a week with a special security card.

The variety of membership packages and a-la-carte services will benefit small or start-up businesses that can't afford to build or lease their own offices, Hughes said.

"For about \$250 a month, they can have a fully functional office. Small businesses and home businesses can have a fair advantage against their bigger competitors," Hughes said.

The company offers contracts as short as three months, which benefits start-up businesses that can't afford to be tied into typical six-month or one-year office lease, Hughes said.

Different sculptures from UTEP students and alumni are in the sculpture garden and add elegance to Intelligent Office.

Photo by Linda Stelter, El Paso Times



Albuquerque-based Pete's Equipment Repair, which sells and services fire truck and sewer cleaning equipment in New Mexico and West Texas, is one of about a dozen clients Hughes has landed since Intelligent Office opened in early January.

Pete's is leasing an office so sales representatives such as August Martin can make sales calls and meet with clients while in El Paso.

Martin, who spends a lot of time on the road, said the arrangement works out well for his company.

"It would be cost-prohibitive to have to build our own office here," Martin said.

El Paso's Intelligent Office franchise is owned by Dax Hughes' father, Jeffrey Hughes.

The franchisor is based in Boulder, Colo. El Paso now is home to the brand's 17th franchise location -- the first in Texas -- Hughes said. Other Intelligent Offices can be found in Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Georgia, Michigan, New York and Ohio.

The El Paso Intelligent Office's new 8,000-square-foot building, designed by local architect Michael Walker, also houses another Hughes company, ALHU International.

Jeffrey Hughes is president of ALHU, which sells equipment for manufacturing corrugated and paper board products. Dax Hughes is vice president of operations of ALHU.

As Intelligent Office's sales coordinator, Dax Hughes will be running the day-to-day operations of the franchise, which has the capacity to service about 150 businesses -- and has room to expand.

"We're excited about it," Dax Hughes said. "Now, a small business can have the atmosphere and amenities of bigger businesses."

David Peregrino may be reached at dperegrino@elpasotimes.com