

FEATURED TIME-SAVER: Intelligent Office

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Creating the Office of the Future

BOULDER, Colo. -- Kelly and Robert Ramsden opened their first Intelligent Office franchise in Fort Lauderdale two years ago. In August 2002, they opened their second in Coral Gables and have their sights set on a third.

The power couple -- both of whom worked in executive positions for companies like Pepsico, Burger King and Arthur Anderson -- chose Intelligent Office for a clear reason: the company was way ahead of its time.

"This is the only company of its kind," says Robert Ramsden, "and it's the right concept for the times."

Founded in 1995, Intelligent Office provides office space and services in a unique, a la carte way to businesses of all sizes -- from the home office to the large corporation.

Intelligent Office provides its clients with a prestigious business address for mail services, drop-off/pick-up courtesies and meeting space. Phone calls are answered live and seamlessly announced and connected to clients, regardless of their current location.

"Telephonically, clients are 'in the office,' but physically they're not, so there's no rent, furniture expense, phone system cost or even a business phone bill," says Ralph Gregory, a former venture capitalist and serial entrepreneur who founded the company.

"Going to work is old school," Gregory adds. "Work is now something you do from anywhere."

Gregory, 58, knows firsthand what it's like to need high-end office space on an occasional basis. That, combined with his "desire to build things," led him to Intelligent Office concept.

"I was excited by the prospect of literally founding a new industry," he explains. "I looked around and saw that nothing like it existed. I immediately knew it could be a billion dollar business."

From its 17 nationwide locations -- 13 of which are franchises -- Intelligent Office customizes services to meet each client's needs and budget, though most use

business address services and a live answer secretary with the "follow me" communications.

For that, clients pay about \$275 a month -- significantly less than they would shell out for their own space, receptionist and phone bill.

Gregory says that low cost and convenience could have broad implications for the commercial real estate industry, which depends on tenants to rent out buildings and house employees.

"Most people in office buildings are in the knowledge business, shuffling papers, working on the Internet and talking on the phone," Gregory explains. "Companies that implement our approach experience higher employee productivity and quality of life, as well as dramatically reduced overhead costs."

But convincing larger firms to allow Intelligent Office to serve as their backbone hasn't been easy for Gregory, who after seven years of educating potential clients and the public on his concept is now starting to sign up larger companies of more than 10 people.

"For a company with say, 500 employees, this kind of change can be daunting," says Gregory. "But it will come."

Gregory's confidence in his revolutionary idea led him to franchise it in 1999 and the first location opened in 2000. "We're putting 'golden arches' over the concept," he says.

Intelligent Office, which in 2001 was The Boulder County Business Report's first IQ Award winner, will soon launch a marketing program that includes television and radio spots, direct mail and a new Web site.

"We're about to take the show on the road," says Gregory. "We're gearing up to push our concept even further into the spotlight, and show the world the value of an 'intelligent office.'"

About Intelligent Office:

Launched in Boulder, Colo. in 1995, Intelligent Office offers a smart alternative to traditional offices and executive suites. Intelligent Office combines the benefits of physical office space with the flexibility of virtual office solutions. The franchise company has 18 locations in nine states.

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