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## Myers Protection Services

### South-side security firm sees alarming growth Revenue could exceed \$3 million this year

By Tammy Lieber  
• Special to IBJ

Usually, someone with a bachelor's degree in law enforcement would look forward to a career as a police officer or detective. In David L. Myers' case, the degree paved the way to becoming a business owner.

Myers, 34, founded Myers Investigations in 1995, shortly after graduating from the University of Indianapolis, funding the startup with a \$5,000 inheritance. Despite entering an industry dominated by older, veteran police officers and detectives, he quickly built a client base among area law firms as a personal-injury investigator—piecing together how a person's life changed after an accident.

By 1998, the business had evolved into Myers Protection Services Inc., thanks to requests from clients who needed security-guard services. To fuel growth of that business, Myers made two acquisitions of local security-guard firms, funded by family members who remain investors.

One of those acquisitions—the 2004 buyout of Excalibur Protection Services—landed MPS in the alarm-system business. Although he initially thought Excalibur's 80 alarm-system and monitoring accounts would be "more of an annoyance than anything," Myers quickly realized their potential.

Now Myers sees alarm systems as his company's biggest growth vehicle. Since the Excalibur acquisition, MPS has expanded its alarm client base from the initial 80 accounts to nearly 800. Within five years, he hopes to increase that number to 10,000 through internal growth and acquisition.

Despite ambitious expansion plans, Myers has no intention of taking MPS beyond the regional level. The company's ability to compete with national powerhouses like ADT and Brinks comes, Myers believes, from MPS' locally based alarm-system monitoring and personal service—he makes sales calls to potential clients in person rather than relying on a sales staff.

In addition to offering the same alarm equipment as the national players, Myers also strives to ensure the same quality of alarm-system monitoring as the big companies. When an alarm goes off at a house or commercial building, calls come into MPS' south-side headquarters.

Last year, Myers moved the business to a former bank building at Thompson and Carson roads, partly because the bank vault and underground power supply provide security for the company's monitoring equipment.

Additionally, income from the security-guard and investigation businesses allows MPS to compete against the national players on price. When businesses can use a local company for the same security equipment and at about the same price, they usually will, Myers said, pointing to his success rate of more than 90 percent in converting sales calls to new accounts.

Most of MPS' new business comes from existing relationships and word-of-mouth advertising, Myers said.

"We do what we say we'll do and provide quality service and products," he said.

The company's reputation in the security-guard business led Indianapolis-based Steven R. Jenkins Co. Inc. to switch its alarm business to MPS, said local store manager Dave Adney. MPS had long been a customer of the wholesaler of uniforms and equipment for law enforcement agencies and security guard companies.

When the store's alarm-monitoring contract came up for renewal, Myers asked to submit a bid from MPS. The bid came back slightly lower than that of the national company that had monitored the store's alarms previously, and MPS' reputation for service sealed the deal, Adney said.

"It's better service for less money," he said. "It was a pretty easy decision."



David Myers has grown his firm by adding services like monitoring alarms—as employee John Biedermann is doing here.

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**Location:** 3205 E. Thompson Road

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**Web site:** www.alarmsystems.cc

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**Founded:** 1995, as Myers Investigations

**Founder:** David L. Myers

**Owners:** David L. and wife Abra Myers

**Service/product:** alarm systems and monitoring, security guard services, legal investigations

**Employees:** 59

**2005 revenue:** \$2.1 million

**One-year goal:** Increase revenue to \$3 million.

**Industry outlook:** Security in the commercial market is expected to grow 8 percent to 10 percent annually, and the fact that relatively few homeowners have security systems provides additional opportunity for growth, according to the Los Angeles-based Security Growth Conference Inc.

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