



# *News Release*

**PITTSBURGH DISTRICT OFFICE**

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## ***Ebensburg computer specialist keys in win as Western Pennsylvania SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award***

EBENSBURG, PA – More than a dozen years ago, Brian Shrift began helping small business owners hammer out hardware issues on their computers. His unique niche market enabled him to grow from running a freelance business to founder and president of Precision Business Solutions, a full-service information technology consulting firm.

It's no coincidence that the young man who has grown his business catering to small business owners will be honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as the 2010 Western Pennsylvania Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

Shrift and eight other local small business owners and advocates will be lauded at the Western Pennsylvania SBA May 28th Awards Luncheon which will be held at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel Pittsburgh. The luncheon is held in conjunction with the 47<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of National Small Business Week.

Shrift, 29, knew he would be doing something with computers when he found himself taking apart the family's computer and putting it back together. "My dad was an accountant and we had an old 286 computer in the basement," he explained. "I wanted to see how it worked so I would take it apart and put it together rather quickly."

Shrift began charging for his consulting services in high school when he assisted a local engineer --- showing him how to use the computer and scanner, as well as set up a web site. After attending technical school and entering the workforce, Shrift set his sites on Saint Francis University, where he simultaneously majored in management information systems and started his own consulting company. "I was the sole employee and had a nice handful of clients," he said chuckling. "The day I graduated, I hired one of my classmates as a technician."

While Shrift may have graduated from Saint Francis, he found himself back on campus utilizing their Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to grow his business. "Because I went there, I knew about the SBDC and they helped me finalize my business plan," he explained. "I went to a local bank for financing and they suggested an SBA loan."

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He set his sites on assisting small business owners whose company had less than 40 computers and catered to their hardware needs. “We help companies that don’t have an internal IT person and offer them solutions,” Shrift stated. “Whether they need a new server or phone system we work with them to help them obtain affordable hardware that is both cost-effective and efficient. For example, we put in phone system for a medical supply firm and saved them \$26,000 a year.”

Shrift and his staff of 11 often are on the road from their base offices in Ebensburg and Johnstown, selling IT services and maintaining their client base of 50-60 managed accounts. “Most of our work is done remotely, so most of our clients rarely see us,” he said. “They come back from lunch and their hardware problems are solved.”

Carl Knoblock, Western Pennsylvania SBA district director, said that Shrift is a prime example of thinking outside the box in today’s technologically advanced world. “Brian has truly carved out a market where he can offer small business owners the equivalent of employing their own IT person,” Knoblock said. “His clients are benefiting from his knowledge while remaining both viable and technologically competitive.”

For Shrift, who logs some 60 hours at work each week, his selection as the Young Entrepreneur of the Year serves as a testament to his dedication.

“It was truly an honor to be considered, let alone win this award,” he said. “But, I wouldn’t be here without the hard work of my staff, as we truly work as a team.”

**Note: If you would like to speak with Brian Shrift or Carl Knoblock, Western Pennsylvania SBA district director, please contact Janet Heyl at 412-395-6560, ext. 103**

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