

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

## SMALL BUSINESS | FILEFAX

### BY JESSICA LONG

A scholar, an athlete and an accomplished small-business owner, Curtis Dadian has taken control of an aging company and reports a 40 percent increase in revenues in just three years.

Founded in 1983, Poway-based Filefax stores and files documents important to its clients, such as hospitals, home lenders, universities, museums and law offices.

Dadian, 40, purchased the company in 2003 for an undisclosed sum. Since then, Filefax's revenues have grown. In 2004, they were \$2.9 million. In 2005, they were \$4.2 million. Revenue figures for 2006 were not available.

By 2011, Dadian said he'd like to see annual revenue grow to \$10 million.

Dadian played Division I men's tennis while attending the University of San Diego in the late 1980s. Ranked nationally, he became a tennis pro out of college.

Dadian's career in the document-storage business began a decade ago when he worked for companies similar to Filefax in a sales and sales management capacity.

Dadian said the principles that guide him in his business life include putting people before profits and always working with a sense of urgency, knowing that "time is money" for both Filefax and its clients. He also believes in looking at the big picture rather than individual accomplishments.

"Our business is not based on any single sale, but rather ongoing relationships," wrote Dadian in his company's values statement. "Each of these relationships outweighs any individual order or project."

### VITALS

**Name:** Curtis Dadian.

**Titles:** President, owner.

**Company:** Filefax.

**Company address:** 13135 Danielson St., Suite 212, Poway.

**Company phone:** (858) 486-6080.

**Year acquired:** 2003.

**Prior business experience:** 15 years in sales and sales management.

**Average hours worked weekly:** 75.

**Source of startup capital:** Home equity loans and personal savings.

**2005 revenue:** \$4.2 million.

**2004 revenue:** \$2.9 million.

**Number of employees:** 10.

**Web site:** www.filefax.com.



Stephen Whalen

Curtis Dadian owns Filefax, a Poway-based company that stores and files documents.

### BACKGROUND

**Birthplace:** Torrance.

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in business administration from USD, 1989; master's degree in executive leadership, also from USD, 2001.

**Age:** 40.

**Current residence:** Poway.

**Family:** Married to Ayda, whom I met when she was visiting San Diego from her hometown of Aleppo, Syria. We have four children: Cael, 10; Cela, 9; Lace, 2; and Alec (now deceased).

**Hobbies:** Tennis; health and fitness; home design/construction (recently completed the design and building of our home in Poway); travel.

### JUDGMENT CALLS

**Reason for getting into business:** Opportunity knocked.

**How I plan to grow the business:** With a growing and professional sales team, continual refinement of our product and service offering and openness to learning from others, including potential partnerships and/or acquisitions.

**Biggest plus of business ownership:** Freedom to navigate the direction of the organization, and the ability to create opportunities for others.

**Biggest drawback:** Consumption of time and mind.

**Biggest business strength:** The high quality of our products and services,

as designed and delivered through our team.

**Biggest business weakness:** Not enough sales/consulting personnel to serve our growing marketplace. Not enough awareness about our solutions throughout the business community.

**Smartest business decision:** To secure exclusive distribution rights to the Spacemaker Corp. brand of products for San Diego and Imperial counties.

**Biggest business mistake:** To expand to include office systems furniture in 2004.

**Toughest career decision:** The decision to leave corporate employment and become a business owner.

**Biggest ongoing challenge:** To create awareness of our unique niche capabilities and solutions throughout our marketplace.

**The most important part of my business:** Our ability to solve problems in a way that others cannot.

**My business works best when:** We are allowed by our clients to "listen and learn" about their business, related challenges and objectives.

**Best way to stay competitive:** Deliver the best solution.

**How I measure success:** By the retention and personal growth of key team members, including employees, contractors and vendors; and the operational improvement impact at client locations.

### GOALS

**Personal goals yet to be achieved:** Work only 50 hours per week by end of 2007, increase time and money contributions to our church, and find more ways to work with young adults in their efforts to make better work and life decisions.

**My five-year business plan:** Refine offering and market, grow sales team to eight people, grow revenue to \$10 million.

**I would sell my business only if:** I believed I was no longer able to add value to the organization as an owner.

**Guiding principles I will continue to follow:** People before profit; trust, accountability and honesty; sense of urgency; service; focus; complete work; knowledge; and sound business practice.