



» RICH OGLE  
Vice President  
Fidelity Bank  
(952) 830-7225

[richo@fidelitybankmn.com](mailto:richo@fidelitybankmn.com)

## Managing Change as a Means to Grow

**SMALL BUSINESSES ARE CHALLENGED** with finding growth opportunities in today's economy. Making drastic changes to the business plan can be intimidating, but staying competitive may mean looking beyond the way things have always been done. Here is the story of one company who took on this challenge successfully.

**Background:** Alliance of Computer Professionals provides high-level, computer consultants to Fortune 1000 companies. They are used to augment existing IT staff, provide specific expertise that existing staff does not have, or work on specific projects that need additional IT staff. [www.acpros.com](http://www.acpros.com)

**Challenge:** One of their primary clients was Northwest Airlines. When Delta purchased Northwest, the IT departments were located in both Minneapolis and Atlanta. This presented a logistics issue that ACP saw as an opportunity.

Although ACP had no experience expanding into and servicing other markets, they made the decision to open an office in Atlanta with the goal to grow their overall business with Delta/NWA. But, how do they successfully launch a new office in Atlanta- over 1000 miles away?

**Solution:** They consulted with their key business resources – their primary bank, Fidelity Bank, their accounting firm, and their law firm to minimize risks and make sure they had a back-up plan should things not proceed as planned.

Their sales manager, who handled the Delta/NWA relationship, began flying to Atlanta every other week. They hired a local Atlanta recruiter to find the best local talent for their new office.

This measured approach to expansion resulted in a very smooth launch. Delta/NWA business increased 20%, and the overall business saw 8% growth.

ACP is now planning to leverage the new office in Atlanta to strategically pursue Coca-Cola, Home Depot and other large players in the Atlanta market.

### Lessons Learned:

- View “changes” as “opportunities”
- Gather input and advice from your key advisors: banker, cpa, attorney, etc.
- Use your key people (sales mgr) to manage the launch so your culture and brand are imprinted from the start.
- Find the best local talent (use resources like local recruiters if needed)
- Leverage the investment to grow revenues further (don't just stop when the launch is complete)