

# EntreQuest buys 'expertise' it says it needs to grow faster

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Nicholas Griner | Staff

Gib Mason (left) and Michael Tich have joined EntreQuest's management team.

**EntreQuest** is acquiring a local search firm this month and made key hires in efforts to grow its business to \$20 million by 2010.

The Baltimore-based corporate sales training firm planned to buy **Hire Sales Pro Inc.** in a deal expected to close Dec. 15, said EntreQuest CEO Jason Pappas. EntreQuest has snagged a host of well-known executives this year in its quest to double in size and revenue. Hire Sales Pro President Michael Tich will join EntreQuest as an executive vice president.

"Mike has entrepreneurial expertise," Pappas said. "He understands how to run a business."

The company also named Gib Mason chief operating officer. Gayle Seker joined the staff as a business training specialist.

Mason formerly worked for Baltimore apparel manufacturer 180s and Hunt Valley consulting firm EMG Corp. Seker drove business

development for Columbia's Evergreen Capital LLC and its sister accounting firm McLean, Koehler, Sparks and Hammond.

Pappas said he hopes the new hires will help EntreQuest eventually become a \$50 million company. Pappas said he and his partner, Joe Mechlinski, are accomplished salesmen, but they lack the experience needed to grow a business exponentially.

Five-year-old EntreQuest more than doubled 2005 revenue of \$1.2 million this year.

Mason said he joined the sales training firm after watching the company grow for several years.

EntreQuest built a solid client base and the kind of established staff needed to expand, he said. "They're raring to go," he added.

Located in Canton's Emerging Technology Center, EntreQuest started the staffing division of its company 18 months ago. The firm targeted recent college graduates looking for sales jobs. Buying Hire Sales Pro will build the company's staffing division, which makes up 20 percent of its business, Pappas said.

The company has 14 employees. Hire Sales Pro has four.

Staffing details are still being worked out, Pappas said. Towson-based Hire Sales Pro has 50 to 60 clients in Baltimore, Tich said. The company provides sales workers for companies in manufacturing, technology and industrial fields.

EntreQuest hired John Hill from E.magination Network LLC in April to expand its selling techniques to technology firms.

"We want to find partners to grow our business faster," Pappas said.