

Entrepreneurs: Let BizFilings do the work

BRIAN NEILL
Herald Staff Writer

Joseph Bartel describes himself as a serial entrepreneur.

The 28-year-old Sarasota resident has dabbled in everything from real estate to a new product he said will revolutionize the plastics industry. He won't say what it is until he gets the idea patented.

Bartel operates under a limited liability corporation called Elliot Watson Companies LLC. But each time Bartel begins a new venture, he forms an offshoot LLC.

A company called BizFilings has helped him with that process, which can be intensive in terms of paperwork and background checks to ensure the desired company name has not already been taken.

"I've actually used BizFilings for six or seven registrations. I'm a repeat offender," Bartel said. "Their ability to deliver what they say they can deliver is good."

Karl D'Accursio also used the Web-based BizFilings recently in response to his business growing.

D'Accursio is the proprietor of Dog Guard of the Suncoast, a North Port franchise selling electronic containment fences for pets.

"I'm in an expansion phase," D'Accursio said. "With the expansion, my concern as a proprietor was that I was taking on a lot more financial responsibility. I thought this was the proper time to incorporate the business."

D'Accursio turned to BizFilings (www.BizFilings.com) to create an LLC for his business.

"I actually did it all through their Web site, which is kind of neat," D'Accursio said. "They have to do the background search, they have to do a filings search to make sure the name is available. They do that all on my behalf instead of me having to run around."

Both Bartel and D'Accursio paid about \$250 for the process, they said.

Various companies on the Internet, such as www.stateofflorida.com and www.form-a-corp.com, offer incorporation services for a range of fees.

Form-a-corp.com, for instance, advertises on its Web site an LLC formation package for \$299 plus \$125 in Florida filing fees. The package includes an expedited state filing service.

The Florida Department of State's Division of Corporations (www.dos.state.fl.us) also offers downloadable incorporation forms on its Web site, free of charge.

But D'Accursio and Bartel both agree that going about incorporating a business on one's own, unless a person is an attorney, can be tricky.

"There's a lot of steps you've got to take on your own and I'm not an attorney," D'Accursio said. "I just figured that a company that specializes in doing this for businesses, they could take me down the road rather than fumbling down it myself."

Bartel said it usually takes about two weeks to get his LLC-formation paperwork back from Madison, Wis.-based BizFilings.

He said he hasn't considered using an attorney or doing the process himself.

"There's something nice about knowing that someone is backing up their work," Bartel said. "Once I used BizFilings I was sort of hooked."