Seniority System

ENHANCED CARE SOLUTIONS HELPS CAREGIVERS KEEP TABS ON SENIORS.

Allison (president) and Scott Gage (vice president) have their young company turning a profit in less than a year.

Allison and Scott Gage's company, Enhanced Care Solutions, has been in business for only a few months, but they've already accomplished what all entrepreneurs dream about: They've got a hot product and are first to bring it to a fast-growing market. The market is health monitoring for seniors, and the Gages' Plymouth-based firm, which installs and services home health systems, has as one of its chief products a monitoring system called QuietCare.

The QuietCare system employs infrared motion sensors to "follow" a senior's movements in five main areas of his or her home: the bedroom, the kitchen, inside and outside of the bathroom, and wherever the person takes his or her medications. The sensors wirelessly transmit the data to a receiver antenna. The receiver transmits information every two hours over an 800-phone line to a central server, which then puts it on a password-protected Web page. A designated caretaker—typically a family member or a professional caregiver—can access the page 24/7. If QuietCare picks up any deviation in the senior's patterns (which have been programmed into the system), it alerts the caretaker by either e-mail or phone. The antenna also incorporates a thermometer, which issues an alert if the temperature in the living space goes too high or too low.

A New York City company, Living Independently, purchased the commercial license for the QuietCare technology in late 2002. QuietCare is the only motion sensor–based monitoring system now commercially available in the U.S.—and Enhanced Care Solutions is Living Independently's sole Midwest distributor.

The Gages both have backgrounds in the business finance world. Allison had worked for local venture capital firms LFE Capital and Coral Ventures, while Scott was a partner with Minneapolis-based mid-market buyout fund Churchill Equity Partners.

The Gages believe that Enhanced Care Solutions can hit $1 million in revenue within two years of launching—probably sooner rather than later, Allison says, given that the company was profitable after two months. It no doubt helps that its biggest client is Minnetonka-based medical services giant UnitedHealth Group. ■

—Bill Clements