

## McGrath got by with help from friends

**Tim Hyland**  
 Special to the Business Journal

**B**LUE BELL — Michael Wiley gets the question all the time: “Where’s Mr. McGrath?”

The answer? There isn’t one.

There was a “Ms. McGrath,” though. That would be Wiley’s grandmother, at least before she was married. And Wiley loved his grandmother so much that when he launched his Blue Bell-based recruiting firm back in 2005, he named it after her.

The name confuses people, Wiley admits.

But it certainly doesn’t seem to be holding McGrath Systems back.

In just under four years, Wiley has built McGrath Systems into one of the region’s largest staffing and recruiting companies. Founded in 2005 with just \$150,000 in startup capital, the company that year generated revenues of more than \$273,000. The next year, revenues jumped to more than \$2.3 million and, in 2007, they surpassed \$4.4 million, for a three-year growth rate of a whopping 1,513.54 percent.

And even in a crumbling economy, Wiley is eyeing more growth in the years to come.

“We’re very focused on expanding our current client base, and on expanding our current business within our existing client base,” Wiley said. “In the long term, I think everyone is looking at the \$50 million sales target. We’ve got a pretty solid plan on how to get there, and I’d say that’s our goal.”

The rapid growth hasn’t surprised Wiley at all.

In fact, he believed it possible from the start, back when he decided to leave his job with a large tech recruiting firm and set out on his own.

Leveraging the contacts he had built up over more than a decade in the business, Wiley got McGrath Systems off to a strong start.

“[When I started] I really went back to a lot of the folks I had developed relationships with over the better part of 10 years, and they felt very comfortable affording us some opportunities,” he said.

He hasn’t slowed down since, networking constantly to both get the word out about this company and, maybe more important, bring in

## No. 2 McGrath Systems



CURT HUDSON

**Michael Wiley named his staffing company after his grandmother.**

the kind of people that could help the firm succeed.

Wiley felt himself to be more than qualified to perform for McGrath in the tech sector, but also knew he needed a deep team of talent around him.

He set out to find similarly experienced professionals in the fields of engineering and accounting, finance and information technology, pharmaceuticals and the life sciences.

With his team in place, he has plans to expand into new markets. Finding talent, he said, shouldn’t be a problem.

“The opportunity to come into a rapidly growing and expanding organization — that can be exciting for certain folks,” he said.

“He’s assembled some real talent in his management team,” said Fox Rothschild’s Michael Harrington, McGrath’s corporate attorney. “They’re real sharp. I’ve always been really impressed with what he’s done with talent — the drive they have, the experience they have.”

Talent has been key, of course.

But maybe more important, Wiley said, has been the fact that McGrath has been able to win a reputation as a firm that delivers both good work and good service.

That’s been instrumental to the company’s success, he said, because the reality is that the staffing industry is still a crowded one, and McGrath has to go head to head with some of

the largest and most established companies in the business, like Tag Worldwide, Adecco Staffing and Manpower.

But Wiley and his team say they manage to win new clients — and keep old ones — with an attention to detail and personal service that the national firms can’t offer.

“Our clients demand value and we deliver,” said Dave Kitchen, managing director for the company. “Ultimately we save our clients time by understanding their business and delivering quality people that have been properly qualified and screened. For a young company we have a lot more resources than most of our competitors.”

That figures to be especially important now, with the economy in turmoil.

But Wiley says he’s confident McGrath will not only weather the storm, but also possibly even thrive.

“Well, I’ll tell you, it’s going to present challenges for most businesses out there,” Wiley remarked on the economy.

“But actually, as things are happening in the market, there are going to be more regulations that the government is going to have to mandate, and in mandating that regulation, it’s going to create opportunities for firms like mine to do consulting and other services for firms that aren’t going to be capable of doing it themselves,” he said.

### UP CLOSE

**COMPANY:** McGrath Systems

**LOCATION:** Blue Bell

**FOUNDER:** Michael Wiley  
**TYPE OF COMPANY:** Full-service staffing and recruiting company.

**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2005

**2007 REVENUE:** \$4.4 million

**2007 EMPLOYEES:** 279

**2005-2007 GROWTH**

**RATE:** 1,513.5 percent

**GROWTH DRIVER(S):** Wiley

tapped into contacts developed over more than a decade working for a large tech recruiting firm before setting out on his own, and hired experienced recruiters who could do the same for other sectors like accounting, finance and information technology, pharmaceuticals and the life sciences.