

# ORLANDO Business Journal

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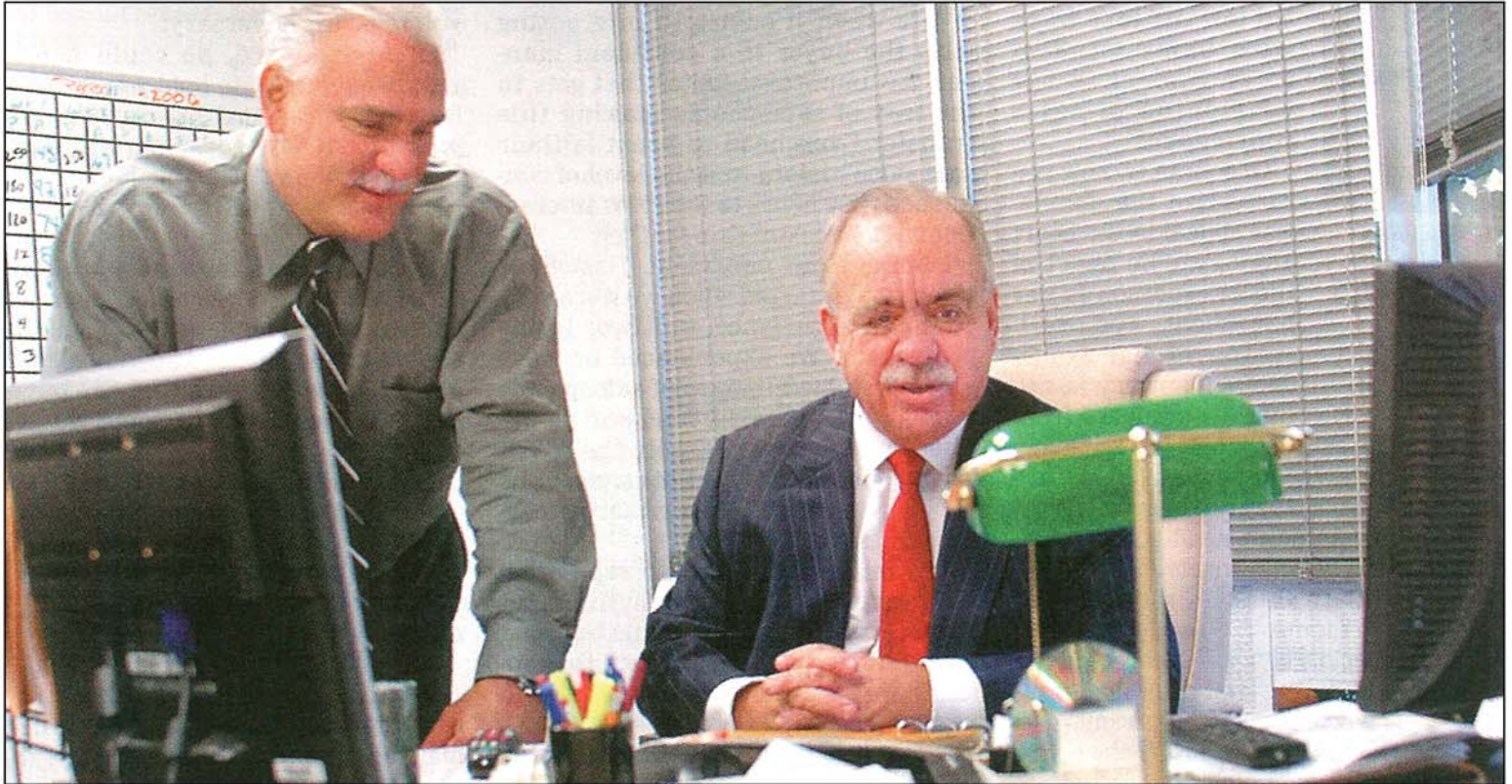


PHOTO BY JIM CARCHIDI

George Cloutier (seated) of American Management Services Inc. converses with company VP Christopher Mosca.

## The turnaround king

George Cloutier helps others rake in the profits.

BY NOELLE H. LOWERY | CONTRIBUTING WRITER

ORLANDO — George Cloutier knows how to make money.

His Orlando-based company — American Management Services Inc. — scored \$20 million in revenue last year.

More importantly, Cloutier knows how to help other companies make money. In fact, American Management Services has been assisting troubled small and midsize businesses in making a profit for the last 20 years.

“We do profits and cash flow,” says Cloutier. “Everything we do has to lead to short-term gains in profitability and/or cash flow for our clients.”

### American Management Services Inc.

**Top official:** George Cloutier, founder and CEO

**Description:** Helping small- and mid-sized businesses make a profit

**2005 revenue:** \$20 million

**Employees:** 120

**Founded:** 1986

**Headquarters:** Orlando

**Offices:** Waltham, Mass.; Rochester, N.Y.; and Washington, D.C.

It is a business model the U.S. Conference of Mayors believes in. Recently, the conference extended its nearly

six-year partnership with Cloutier by another 20 years.

Dubbed PartnerAmerica, the partnership’s objective is twofold: to expand cities’ small business programs and sensitivities, and to allow American Management Services to reach out to businesses across the nation through free public forums providing information on management, finances and profit improvement measures, and government procurement opportunities. Cloutier has hosted some 100 of these forums since creating this partnership with the conference.

PLEASE SEE **CLOUTIER**, PAGE 20

# Cloutier

Continued from page 19

"American Management Services has proven to be a strong and effective advocate for the small business person," explains Kathryn Kretschmer-Weyland, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Conference of Mayors. "(It) was the first to step up to the national challenge of helping our mayors help their small business communities and has committed to continuing (its) assistance in the next several years."

Still, it has been a long road to American Management Services' partnership with the conference.

The brainchild of Cloutier, American Management Services was developed while he attended Harvard Business

**'We look for profit leaks, and we sit down with clients and explain where they can make more money.'**

**George Cloutier,**  
American Management Services

School. He wrote his master's thesis on the need for professional consulting services for businesses based on producing a profit and immediate cash flow, and he started with three clients — an armored car company, a cable television channel and a blue jean company — before he even graduated.

"I felt there were no companies

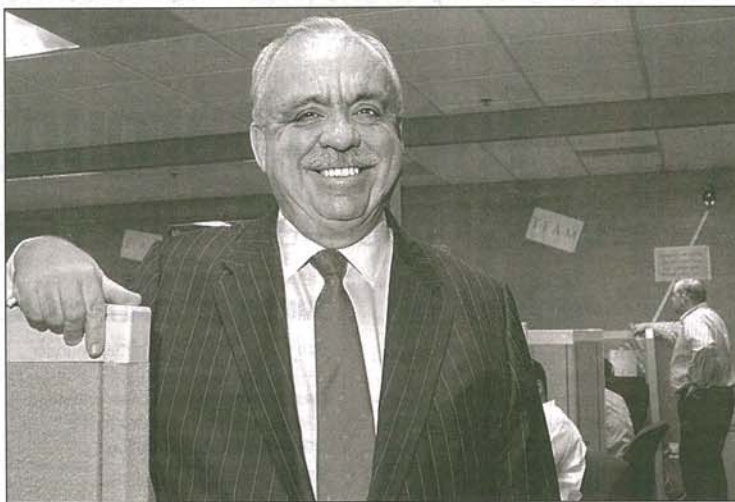


PHOTO BY JIM CARCHIDI

**George Cloutier started American Management Services while attending Harvard Business School.**

out there providing services to help small and midsize companies make a profit," notes Cloutier. "We look for profit leaks, and we sit down with clients and explain where they can make more money."

After 12 years in business, Cloutier began talks with the U.S. Conference of Mayors to create PartnerAmerica as a way to expand and brand American Management Services and its product.

The gamble paid off for both Cloutier and companies that have attended forums through PartnerAmerica.

Just ask the owners of sister companies BIGgross Inc. and OnPoint LLC.

The St. Petersburg-based automotive, advertising, marketing and promotions solutions companies are among the more than 6,000 companies across 400 industries that American Management Services has helped bring back from the brink.

Although the companies had grown exponentially in 10 years — from under \$1 million in revenue to \$10 million — their margins were slipping in 2004. "Our growth was extraordinary, but also incredibly stressing," says Eric Gerard, president of the companies.

American Management Services' assessment of the companies found a

## Advice to small and midsize businesses from George Cloutier:



- **Pay yourself first** for what you are doing.
- **Cash is king.** If you don't have any, you are in trouble.
- **Work like a dog.**
- **Give up golf.**
- **Make decisions today.** Do not keep putting it off.
- **Look to improve** your financial statements each month.
- **If your business** is not doing well, stop denying it.
- **Take full responsibility** for your failures and change them.

need for them to restructure and create a new pricing protocol and establish employment review practices and new standard operating procedures.

The result: The companies' profits are up by 50 percent and growth by 30 percent this year alone.



Gerard

"It was not a cheap proposition but definitely a beneficial one," explains Gerard. "You do have to be willing to leave your ego at the door, though, in this process. You may have gotten your business to this point, but what you've

got isn't going to take you as far as you want to go."