

## Spotlight: Brinks Services, Inc.

By Lisa Kovach | June 6, 2005

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As the son of a real estate broker, Bill Brink often helped his father fix up his rental properties. "He would have us three sons do the painting, the plumbing, electrical and screen doors," Brink said. "I became pretty skilled in home repairs." Like his father, Brink decided to pursue a career in real estate, getting his license right out of high school and falling back on his handyman skills when needed. But after several years in real estate, Brink saw there was a need for plumbing professionals and decided to start his own business. In 1979, at the age of 23, Brink started Brinks Services, Inc. by simply placing an ad in a newspaper touting his service. The calls came in, and now 26 years later, Brink's business has grown to reach revenues of nearly \$2 million in 2004. Most of the company's clients are homeowners and commercial property owners who have a deteriorating plumbing system.

### **RESUME**

Name: Bill Brink.  
Title: President.  
Company: Brinks Services, Inc.  
Phone: (619) 283-9647.  
Founded: 1979.

Prior experience: Real estate renovation; plumbing and leak detection work for various companies.  
Average hours worked weekly: 50.  
Source of startup capital: \$52 for an ad in the San Diego Union.  
2004 revenue: Under \$2 million.  
2003 revenue: Under \$1 million.  
Number of employees: 20.  
Web site: [www.brinksservices.net](http://www.brinksservices.net).

### **BACKGROUND**

Born: March 15, 1956, in San Diego.  
Education: Plumbing, general building and engineering contractor. Licensed plumbing inspector.  
City of residence: Carlsbad.  
Family: Wife, Diane; daughter, Christy-Lee, 16; son, William Barrett, 12.  
Hobbies: Investments and supporting activities of my children.

### **JUDGMENT CALLS**

7976 Engineer Road, #100 • San Diego, CA 92111 • (619) 283-9647 • Fax (858) 279-4290



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SINCE 1979 INVESTIGATION - RESTORATION  
A PREMIER BUILDING - ENGINEERING COMPANY

Reason for getting into the business: Satisfaction of solving building and plumbing problems for customers.  
How I plan to grow the business: One customer at a time. Referrals from satisfied customers. Ninety percent from referrals or repeat customers.  
Biggest plus of business ownership: Being your own boss and the independence to make decisions.  
Biggest drawback: Time commitment.  
Biggest business strength: Excellent support staff; estimators are experienced project foremen; and on-site managers are capable and responsible for jobs.  
Biggest business weakness: Marketing.  
Biggest risk: Legal liabilities for contamination to properties; personal injuries.  
Smartest business decision: To go with CuraFlo, the national leader in epoxy pipeline rehabilitation.  
Biggest business mistake: Taking on new construction with general contractors who couldn't pay their bills.  
Toughest career decision: Real estate vs. plumbing.  
Biggest ongoing challenge: Finding additional qualified personnel.  
The most important part of my business: Relationship of trust with insurance companies and adjustors.  
My business works best when: Revenue exceeds expenses.  
How your business has changed throughout the years: It has grown tremendously and the technology of how to investigate and repair pipes has changed dramatically.  
Best way to stay competitive: Use new technology.  
How you measure success: Satisfied customers.

### **GOALS**

Goals yet to be achieved: Continue to grow the business.  
My five-year business plan: Add other franchises as they mature and become available.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

I would sell my business only if: I found somebody who would take care of it so I could retire comfortably, put my kids through college and go into real estate and investments.  
Guiding principles: Golden rule; do what's right.  
Most admired entrepreneur: Frank Blau, a retired plumber, who led this blue-collar industry into flat rate pricing.  
Important lessons learned: Get paid for what you do, work for quality people, hire good people and pay decent wages.  
Advice for those looking to go into business: Be especially conscious of the time commitment, the debt load, and the risk-to-reward ratio.

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