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Papo provides document security

*Karen Maserjian Shan
For the Poughkeepsie Journal*

Owning a company wasn't Judith Papo's idea. It was her husband's.

"My husband is — he's totally infectious," Papo, 34, said. "He has ideas and he just brings people in and he makes it happen."

The result? Papo, a former high school English teacher and a certified public accountant, is president of HV Shred, a document security and on-site shredding company based in Hopewell Junction that she co-owns with her father-in-law, Fran Papo, the company's vice president of operations.

The idea for HV Shred came after her husband, Jeff Papo, and a partner opened Tuminaro Pharmacy in Hopewell Junction in 2004. The partners realized they needed a shredding service to handle the pharmacy's sensitive documents. Jeff Papo looked for a suitable company, but didn't like his options. That was when he suggested to his wife that they establish their own.

"He said, 'How hard can this be?' " Judith Papo said.

She took to the idea and the couple began to research the viability of owning and operating a shredding company.

"We were looking into what it takes to run a successful on-site shredding business," said Papo, including meeting with truck suppliers in Washington state and North Carolina. They realized they needed a truck to fit their business plan, servicing the Route 9 corridor. More help came from the Greater Southern Dutchess and Dutchess County Regional chambers of commerce.

"They provide the workshops, they help you understand social media and websites and how to talk to people," she said. "I've had meetings with (Dutchess County) SCORE (Counselors to America's Small Business); there's so much available for free."

HV Shred was established late in 2007, with Papo handling marketing and such and Fran Papo driving the truck. It provides on-site service where documents are shredded in a customer's parking lot by way of a truck equipped with blades. A color monitor on the truck allows clients to watch the shredding as it happens.

"There's this whole alphabet soup of legislation that our clients have to navigate," Papo said, including various regulations relating to the proper disposal of sensitive documents. Papo gives her clients a certificate of destruction that affirms such documents have been shredded beyond recognition, per federal law.

Sherry Tomaselli, firm administrator with Vanacore, DeBenedictus, DiGiovanni & Weddell, LLP in Newburgh has known Papo for about two years, during which time HV Shred has serviced the accounting firm.

"As you can imagine, we are extremely concerned that any documentation we destroy is done so in a

manner that ensures that our client information is totally protected," Tomaselli said in an e-mail. "Judith explained to me that she decided to open her business because her husband owns a pharmacy and felt the same way about his clients' medical information. I knew immediately that her company was the right option." Papo, Tomaselli said, has great work ethic.

"I am not surprised that Judith owns her own company," Tomaselli said. "She would be successful in any venture that she chose as all of her skills are relevant and transferable."

Yet Papo is quick to acknowledge those who helped her along the way. "There's so many generous — hugely generous — people that gave their time and their advice and their experiences to help us get started," she said. "You do learn that there is a great community out there that helps each other."

Additional Facts

Judith Papo

Age: 34

Title: President and co-owner, HV Shred

Education: Bachelor's degree in English, Binghamton University; master's degree in education, University at Albany; bachelor's degree in accounting, Mount Saint Mary College

Professional affiliations: Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce; Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce; Dutchess County Environmental Management Council; Poughkeepsie 3000 BNI; New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants

On the Web

- HV Shred: www.hvshred.com
 - Visit the Poughkeepsie Journal's young professionals' page at www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/yp
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