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Sarah Harris, left, and Beth Miller founded GoodDeeds LLC, a life management services company, to help area female professionals with home project management, organizational services, shopping services, event planning, travel planning and research.

GoodDeeds pays dividends for local businesswomen

BY JENNIFER LECLAIRE
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

When Lisa Wallace agreed to host a charity fund-raiser with 100 guests at her Winchester home, organizing the event was more work than she had expected.

The attorney, wife, and mother of three teenage boys had the catering under control, but the décor was another matter altogether — and time was of the essence.

Wallace did what more Boston-area women are doing when they find themselves in need of a helping hand to tackle personal projects.

She called **GoodDeeds LLC**, a life management services company founded by **Beth Miller**, 46, of Newton and **Sarah Harris**, 36, of Natick.

"GoodDeeds decorated the whole house on the same day as the fund-raiser — and took pictures of it so I could do it myself next year," Wallace said.

"I didn't have the imagination or the time to do it myself — and GoodDeeds relieved a lot of stress," she said.

After working together in corporate executive positions for 13 years, Harris and Miller leveraged personal relationships — and \$50,000 of their personal money — to get GoodDeeds off the ground in 2003.

Those personal relationships were a key to building business in the beginning, said Miller, because GoodDeeds is much different from your typical errand or concierge company.

"We emphasize a personal touch. We are a trusted extension of our customers," Miller said. "That means we don't take referral fees from vendors. We pass along any discounts we can get to our clients. That strategy provides value to our target market."

Their target market: women just

like them. GoodDeeds offers six basic service categories: home project management, organizational services, personal shopping services, event planning, travel planning, and research and resourcing.

In fact, after exploring 25 different business concepts, the duo settled on life management services, a European concept, because they remembered what it was like have too much to do, not enough time to do it, and nowhere to turn for help.

The duo agrees that word of mouth is GoodDeeds' best PR. Miller and Harris have also leveraged media exposure and forged relationships with luxury residence concierges and local gyms to educate consumers about their services.

Even with 11 employees who generate \$85 an hour for GoodDeeds services, the founders admit striking a balance between delivering services and finding time to invest in business development is their biggest challenge, one they agree they will probably always have with their professional services business model.

Still, the duo predicts 150 percent revenue growth this year and is looking at growth strategies that will take the concept nationwide.

One tactic is to replicate the model in other cities, with Washington, D.C., as a likely target next year. The duo also sees potential in offering their services as a corporate employee benefit.

"Word of mouth is always going to be our primary strategy for growing this business," Harris said. "We build relationships with our clients. That's why nearly 70 percent of our business is from repeat customers. The goal now is to expand the target market to include busy male executives."