

The Papé Group

Specialty: Capital equipment sales, rental and service

Management: Randy Papé, CEO

Year founded: 1938

Headquarters: Eugene, Ore.

2005 revenues: N/A

Projected 2006 revenues: N/A

With 1,600 employees, Papé is the dominant supplier of capital equipment in the Northwest and beyond. Its five companies sell, rent and service equipment used in construction, logging, warehousing and private aviation in seven states.

A great year

Tim Clevenger, Papé's director of corporate development, said 2005 was a great year for all five companies.

He said construction-equipment sales were very strong, "from small Bobcat-size (machines) all the way up to big Hitachi excavators."

He said equipment price increases and shortages have had little effect on Papé.

"Most of our customers are at a point where they're so busy, they have to get equipment to process their work," he said. "It's just been phenomenal."

Size matters

The former advertising executive said Papé's size has made the difference.

"Having an organization with enough resources to find a part in Spokane and ship it overnight to Fresno, that can make or break a guy who's stuck in Fresno and really needs that part."

Clevenger said technological advances have really reshaped the machines that Papé sells, and some of the newer equipment is "truly revolutionary."

"The cabs, they're like sitting on the deck of the Starship Enterprise," he said.

The new machines require technicians, salespeople and operators alike to achieve new levels of tech savvy.

But technology has not invaded how machines are sold: Papé sells all its merchandise in brick-and-mortar stores, not on the Internet.

"You need to demo this stuff, see how much dirt it really moves," he said. "It's pretty difficult to communicate that online."

Expanding operations

Last year, Papé bought Diamond-back Rentals in Las Vegas and Phoenix, Gregory Equipment in Redding, Calif., and Nortrax West, a chain of equipment dealers in northern California.

Are more takeovers in the offing? "None that we can be public about," Clevenger said, "but we will further our mission to become the premier provider of capital equipment in the West, and that means continuing to expand."