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# FASTEST 1000

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2007

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

# Months of Effort Puts San Diego's Fast-Growing Private Companies In the Spotlight



**Armon Mills**  
President & Publisher  
San Diego Business Journal

Once again, let me take a moment to explain the back story about our annual research effort to find the fastest-growing private companies in San Diego County.

We start our process early in the spring, asking for questionnaires and documentation from companies eager to earn a spot on our list of the fastest-growing companies. We receive hundreds of responses from entrepreneurs eager to land a spot on the list. And not everyone makes the list.

To earn consideration, the business must be based in San Diego County. Moreover, the business must be privately held — and independent — it can't be a division or subsidiary of a public, or private, company. Each qualifying company must have generated revenues of at least \$200,000 in 2004.

We then verify the financial information supplied by each company, backing the financial details of each company's business operations in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Liz Wiedemann, the Business Journal's senior researcher (now our retail reporter), then spends many weeks crunching the data in the questionnaires, which is then used to place the companies on the list.

It's an effort that requires plenty of attention to detail and cross-checking. But in the end, the final list is a resource of great importance in terms of reflecting strength and diversity of the business community.

As I noted last year, the 100 companies on this list represent the best and brightest when it comes to reflecting the tenacity of our business men and women.

We applaud those companies that made the list, and all of the companies that participated.

By the way, the San Diego Business Journal is now making all of our lists available at our Web site, [www.sdbj.com](http://www.sdbj.com).

If you'd like an electronic copy, the lists are available either in the Microsoft Excel or Adobe PDF format. You can buy separate lists, or the entire 2007 Book of Lists, just by using a credit card at our site.

And if you think your business might qualify for future iterations of our fastest-growing private companies list, send us a note, and let us know.

We'll be more than happy to send you a qualifying questionnaire for the 2008 list. We've already worked up a folder for that list, as well as the many other important business lists that we have on our editorial calendar for the rest of 2007 as well as 2008.

We're confident you'll find the List of 100 Fastest-Growing Private Companies a storehouse of information that you can put to good use.

— Armon Mills

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## Confirm BioSciences

**CEO:** Zeynep Ilgaz.

**Location:** 5663 Balboa Ave., #430, San Diego.

**2006 revenues:** \$2.6 million.

**2004-2006 growth:** 973 percent.

**Number of local full-time employees:** 15.

**Web site:** www.confirmbiosciences.com.

No.

3

# Confirm BioSciences Has the Heads Up On Market for Home Drug Tests

New Product Developed in  
Response to Consumer Demand

BY EMILY KNIGHT

**Z**eynep Ilgaz says the key to the success of her drug testing company, **Confirm BioSciences**, is simple: She kept her ear to the ground and filled an unmet demand in the market.

The company started from her garage in 2001 and has expanded to make \$2.6 million in revenues in the last year, making it No. 3 on the San Diego Business Journal's List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies.

Please turn to CONFIRM on Page 10

## RSI Roofing, Inc

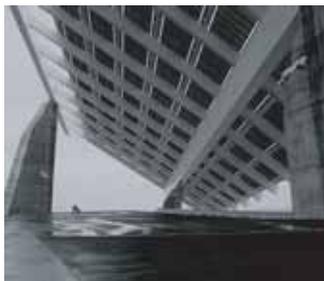
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Limited to the first 144 players  
[www.HomeAidSD.org](http://www.HomeAidSD.org)



## Confirm:

*Continued from Page 8*

An important part of this growth includes the launch of a product called HairConfirm, which offers customers the ability to get a professional lab screening for drug use from home. HairConfirm is targeted to parents looking for a way to easily and accu-

Michael S. Domine

Confirm BioSciences CEO Zeynep Ilgaz says feedback from customers was instrumental in developing the company's HairConfirm drug screening product.

rately determine if their teens are using drugs.

Before the product's launch just over two months ago, there was no similar service available, but Ilgaz said the response has been enthusiastic.

Confirm had been in the business of workplace drug testing before, but their new product is the first hair follicle drug test kit in the market that can detect drug use as well as usage frequency for up to 90 days.

Ilgaz said her business will continue to grow on the principles of innovation and serving client needs first.

"It's really about listening to market demand and making a product based

on that, and not trying to generate demand first," she said.

### Critical Feedback

She noted that Confirm BioSciences' advisory board was instrumental in tailoring HairConfirm to customers' preferences. Since the product occupies a unique niche, this kind of feedback was critical.

"Our strong point is listening to our customers, listening to their needs, and using that to always improve our product," Ilgaz said. "We went one step further and talked to our customers at length to see what type of features they would like to have in the product — like a full drug history report, a 90-day detection period, and fast online results."

HairConfirm has been such a success that Confirm BioSciences is already taking it to major retailers. The company has signed deals with Kmart, Amazon.com, and CVS.com, and she said she is in talks with other large retail chains such as Walgreens.

The company is also in the process of developing other kinds of test kits, such as a saliva-based drug test and a hair-based test for toxins and "general health." These are all part of long-term plans to serve a much larger market, according to Ilgaz.

Another important long-term goal is the continuation of the company's philanthropy. It has made financial and in-kind contributions to the Alpha Project for the Homeless, San Diego Youth and Community Services, Teen Challenge International, Volunteers of America, the Alcohol & Drug Services Center and the Department of Education. Ilgaz sees the expansion of this side of her business as an important complement to product development.

### Dedicated To Philanthropy

Confirm BioSciences' dedication to philanthropy isn't surprising when you hear Ilgaz talk about what San Diego and its business community mean to her. She notes that being the owner of a small business has given her access to a variety of local support services and resources.

Local law firm Mintz Levin has been especially important in providing Confirm BioSciences with public relations services, she said. Ilgaz is also involved with several entrepreneurial networks, including those at San Diego State University and UC San Diego.

Ilgaz emphasizes how important her family has been for her while developing her business.

"I learned that a good business partnership works like a good marriage," she said, also noting that her husband of 10 years, Serhat Pala, has been one of the most influential people in the process. "I'm a hard worker and I'm dedicated to my business and my family."

# A very different approach to Business Banking...

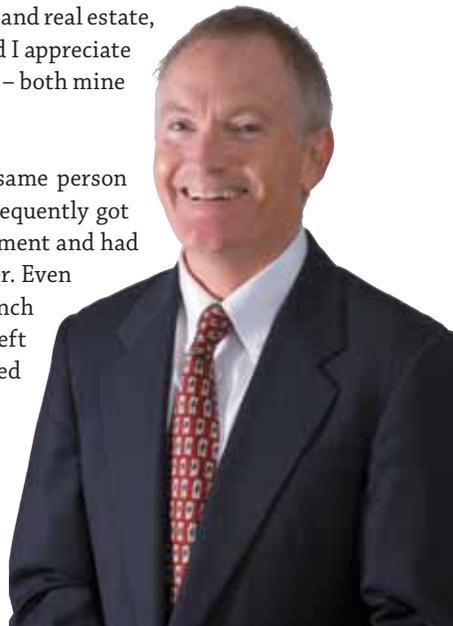
*John Thickstun is a successful attorney and real estate investor. He has practiced law for over two decades in San Diego and knows the banking landscape well. Below John shares his thoughts on business and bankers.*

**On the Value of Time** – In both legal work and real estate, time is everything. My time is valuable, and I appreciate working with professionals who value time – both mine and theirs.

**On Big Banks** – I rarely dealt with the same person at the big banks. When I called them, I frequently got passed around from department to department and had to answer the same questions over and over. Even when I developed a relationship with a branch manager, they usually got transferred or left the bank. Getting the next person up to speed wastes too much time and energy.

**On First Business Bank** – First Business Bank really is different. It reminds me of banking 20 years ago, before banks became large and impersonal. They always work around my schedule to meet my deadlines. And I only have to call one person to get the answer. Things just happen faster at First Business Bank because the employees there know me by name. I'm treated like an individual and not like just another account number.

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