

2008 Small Business Team of the Year

Cynthia Brown, President
Jeffery P. Germann, Vice President, General Manager
Brown Germann Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a Shred-it
Brown & Germann Realty, LLC

Cynthia Brown and Jeffery Germann started Brown Germann Enterprises, Inc., d/b/a Shred-it in the metro St. Louis area in late 1998. The company provides on-site document destruction of confidential materials and recycling of all paper in 12 Missouri and five Illinois counties. Shred-it provides all automatic clients with locked security containers for the secure storage of all confidential materials and implements a service schedule that fits their need. . A Shred-it truck comes to the clients' location to perform on-site shredding on this predetermined schedule. Another type of service available to clients is called a purge service that is provided for periodic or one time clean-outs of confidential material. .

In the first four years of business, revenue grew 742% over the first full 12 months of operation, and revenue growth since inception averages over 56% annually. They increased the staff from three to 27 full-time employees, and grew the business to 11 owned and operated on-site shredding trucks.

Cindy and Jeff established a second company in 2004, Brown & Germann Realty, LLC, to build the building the company now occupies. The building has given them the ability to bale the shredded paper at their facility and ship the material directly to the paper mills for recycling. The building has also given Shred-it the room to grow and add staff that that has been instrumental in Shred-it's success.

Cindy, Jeff, and Shred-it won the 2002 and 2006 (awarded in 1/07) Shred-it franchise President's Award, beating out more than 100 Shred-it branches. The award is based on sales growth, customer and employee satisfaction, and living the Mission, Vision, and Values of Shred-it. Cindy now serves on the Shred-it Franchise Advisory Board. Additionally, Shred-it won the 2007 Customer Survey Award for the USA with the highest overall score of 4.59/5.0.

Cindy was first named one of the 2003 Top Women Business Owners by the St. Louis Small Business Monthly. She received the title again in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. In 2003 the St. Louis Business Journal named her one of the 25 Most Influential Business Women. She has been an active member of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) St. Louis and serves on the National Healthcare Policy Forum and as a member mentor.

Jeff organized the first "Community Shred" in St. Louis; and each year Shred-it partners with local police agencies, the Missouri Attorney General's office, the Better Business Bureau and local businesses to offer free shredding to the St. Louis community in an effort to increase the awareness of identity theft and to provide a solution to this growing problem. This company-sponsored volunteer program has been such a success that it has been replicated in other communities around the nation.