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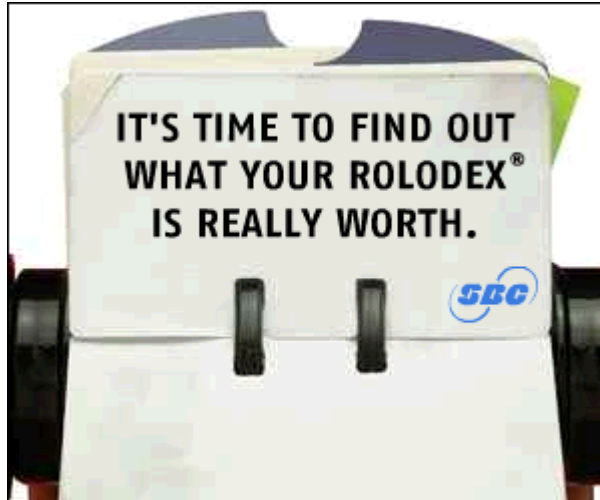
## Jason Morris, 37

**President and co-founder, Background Information Services**

Jason Morris is used to digging into other people's backgrounds instead of discussing his own past. But as the president and co-founder of Beachwood employee screening firm Background Information Services Inc. at age 37, Mr. Morris has some explaining to do.

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There was only one thing Mr. Morris ever wanted to do — investigate.

"I am very passionate about what I do," Mr. Morris said. "I love being here."



He considered a career as a police officer or FBI agent, but didn't want to spend years climbing the ladder to get to the point where he could do the hands-on investigative work he liked.

After graduating from Kent State University with a criminal justice degree, Mr. Morris worked for his

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family's small private security and investigation company for about five years, but got an itch to start his own investigation firm that focused less on personal disputes.

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"It was a mutual split. I loved investigations, but hated the cheating wives and that type of stuff," Mr. Morris said.

With the business advice and financial support of a close friend's father, Les Fishman, and brother, Nick Fishman, the company opened a small Beachwood office with one employee in 1999.

Almost five years later, Background Information Services screens prospective employees for 1,000 clients in 50 states. Among them are McDonald's Corp. of Oak Brook, Ill., the American Cancer Society and financial news and information company Bloomberg LP of New York.

Mr. Morris would not give specifics on the company's revenues, but said sales in 2003 were more than \$2 million.

In Northeast Ohio, Background Information Services has 30 employees who conduct reference interviews, verify past employment and education, compile credit reports and check driving records. It also has 3,500 free-lance court researchers nationwide searching the criminal records of every county a prospective employee has lived in for the past seven to 10 years.

Mr. Morris has surrounded himself with a young diverse staff, which he said is a lure for clients. The staff is mostly under 40 and dominated by women because he said those are the types of people who often do the best investigative work.

Les Fishman, who is the company's CEO, said the business has grown beyond his wildest expectations.

"When we started out and got an office with one employee, we thought we'd just see where it would go. We thought it would be a small business with modest revenue," Mr. Fishman said.

He attributes the success to Mr. Morris.

"It is all Jason," Mr. Fishman said. "It's been his ideas, his education, his background in the industry, and we have built it around that."

— *Shannon Pettypiece*

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