

# Building Character - Art Imitates Business Life for This Entrepreneur

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Getting your ideas across can be difficult, but Steven Birchfield, founder and CEO of Automation Centre in Tucson, Arizona, would tell you to try drawing it out.

After a conversation with a screenwriter during a business trip, Birchfield, 39, was motivated to integrate cartoon characters in sales pitches for his software, which helps companies' service operations run more efficiently.

Birchfield's amusing characters for the fictitious Bizco company, like Victor Vice President, Hanna HR, Joe User and Ashley Admin, not only communicate to clients what the software does, but they also inspire Birchfield's employees. "We write and test all the software with these characters in mind."

Automation Centre's sales pitches now sail smoothly, with demonstrations that literally illustrate clients' operational situations. With projected 2002 sales of \$4 million and an impressive list of new clients like 3M, Coca-Cola, DuPont, McDonald's, Pioneer and Sanyo, Birchfield can attest cartoons aren't just for kids. ♦



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