

SMALL BUSINESS of the month



Owner and President Brian O'Donnell, second from right, has a team at American WeatherStar who help their authorized dealers increase their business. The 10 year-old company is a Mobile-based commercial and industrial roofing maintenance and material supplier.

AWS Shouts from the Rooftops

If you ask **Brian O'Donnell** what prompted him to start his own business, he'll tell you it was "all about seeing the writing on the wall" when the company he was working for on the East Coast was struggling financially. He approached the owners about being an independent representative selling a variety of products, including those of his now former employer, and they agreed. The company survived, and O'Donnell's experience helped him create his own business three years later.

American WeatherStar (AWS), a Mobile-based commercial and industrial roofing maintenance and material supplier of roof coatings, wall coatings, spray foam insulation and single-ply roofing systems, is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

O'Donnell took advantage of the flexibility technology offered him and returned home to Mobile with his family to start his business. Ten years later, he is still taking advantage of his skill to see more than is presented and

his marketing degree from the University of South Alabama to create and package energy-efficient roofing systems with broad appeal.

The company's products are used to stop leaks, cool a building's interior or implement preventive maintenance and repair flat roofs.

O'Donnell believes what makes AWS stand out among its competition is his entrepreneurial spirit to work for his customer base of authorized independent dealers – the contractors actually doing the work, he explains.

He and his team of nine employees establish vendor partnerships throughout the country by customizing marketing materials featuring American WeatherStar products and each one of the independent contractors. And with follow-up calls and coordinated advertising efforts, the company has a proven track record of landing jobs for its clients.

"We differentiate ourselves from the competition by showing our

customers how we can grow their business," says O'Donnell.

In addition to its local employees, AWS has five independent contractors located in Colorado, Tennessee, Florida, and New York.

"In the roofing business, it's all about timing. No one really wants to put on a new roof, so they think about it and save money and then, when they can't hold out any longer, they make a decision about who to use," says O'Donnell. "That's where our approach to business really pays off – we strive to achieve top-of-mind awareness for our products and our contractors."

Earlier this year, AWS bought a 2,500-square-foot facility on Lees Lane. The new location gives the company the space it needs to make samples, test materials and systems, and hold onsite training sessions, as well as room for a business development center.

For more information, go to www.americanweatherstar.com.

Go to mobilechamber.com/award.asp to submit a Small Business of the Month nomination, or contact Danette Richards at 251-431-8652 or drichards@mobilechamber.com.