

As seen in...

# Business Digest

## Playing the matching game at Bohan & Bradstreet

by Mimi Ricci

**E**d Bradstreet loves games. The first thing he shows visitors to his New Haven office is the mighty Yale Bulldog and wooden slips outside the building, the former Yale boathouse. He then points out a mini putting green which he set up only a few strides from his desk. And when asked about the success of his employment firm, Bohan & Bradstreet, he starts by talking about "the game."

"It is a game. Either we have the position and have to find the right person, or we have the person and have to find that ideal position. Loving games," he smiles, "this was kind of meant for me."

The life-long resident of New Haven admits, however, that he made several moves before realizing he was a natural in the employment business. After graduating from Hopkins Day School and the University of Vermont, he took a job selling adding machines. "It was not easy for me because I had never seen a balance sheet," he says. "I never took any business classes in school and always earned my educational expenses by doing anything from unloading freight cars to bartending."

After selling for two years, Bradstreet joined an employment agency. The subsequent 11 years with Uni-Search, he says, provided him with the foundation on which he now builds. "I worked with a man there who was an excellent mentor for me," he says. "He knew everything about the business; all the practical approaches. I began by placing all kinds of people, from industrial engineers to news editors. Then I started cultivating the accounting, banking and data processing areas and developed a specialty."

Bradstreet further honed his skills as a Partner at Romac, one of the nation's largest employment agencies. But after four years as the firm's number one producer, he was eager to move on.

"I've always had ways that I would like to run a business," he says, "and I knew I could never put those ways into practice working for someone else."

Two years ago, Bradstreet formed Bohan & Bradstreet. The firm is composed of two former colleagues from Romac, and seven additional personnel professionals. And who is Bohan? "Bohan is my middle name," says Bradstreet with a playful grin. "It was also the name of a fictional childhood character called 'Wahoo Bohan.' It sounded better



**Ed Bradstreet in his office at 74 Forbes Avenue in New Haven. The building used to house the Yale rowing teams. With wooden slips outside and enough space inside to set up a putting green, the location is perfect for Bohan & Bradstreet: it captures the role that games play in the employment firm.**

than: Bradstreet, Me, Myself & I!" he laughs.

When Bradstreet discusses his management style, his conversation returns to the game, a locus from which he rarely strays. "Everyone here participates in the game," he says, "because everyone has something to offer. I have a very open attitude; anyone can become a partner. If you produce for this company then you deserve to see the rewards. Everyone here, even office administrators, is on a bonus program. And everyone's head is in the game."

Anyone visiting Bohan & Bradstreet quickly notices its commitment to teamwork. All the players, including Bradstreet, sit in one large room. And Bradstreet promotes the efforts of all his employees by

saying "we" rather than "I" when he talks about his firm's accomplishments.

According to Bradstreet, because his consultants are members of several area business associations, the agency derives most of its business from referrals. "We're in constant communication with these associations, whether by socializing, direct mailings or company visits. As a result, we recruit for staff, manager and executive levels in all size businesses. A president of one company will refer us to another company, and ask us to come in."

Once Bohan & Bradstreet comes in, they launch a major research campaign within the company.

"We find out its strengths and weaknesses, what the chemistry of the company