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Maitland's DPT on cutting edge of peripherals business

[Paul Dillon](#)

Staff Writer

[Distributed Processing Technology Inc.](#) in Maitland, automated machines attach tiny electronic parts to circuit boards at lightning speed, then solder the connections and prepare the units for testing.

After the units pass the muster of scrutinizing technicians in white lab coats, they are packaged and shipped to distributors, resellers and ultimately companies that will install them in their computer systems.

DPT's products go by trademarked names like SmartCache and SmartRAID. And unless you're a computer expert, you probably have no clue what these high-tech gadgets do.

But 19-year-old DPT has built itself into a fast-expanding Central Florida company by helping to pioneer the development of so-called "peripherals" -- disk controllers, digital memory devices and other components that enhance the speed and performance of computer networks.

"We're always trying to think of new things to do to improve our products," says [President Steve Goldman](#).

In recent years, DPT's hard work has led to significant increases in sales. The company posted sales of \$45 million in 1995, up 36 percent from \$33.1 million in 1994, and projects \$50 million this year.

DPT's performance puts the company at No. 47 on this year's Orlando Business Journal Golden 100, a list of the area's 100 largest privately held companies ranked by revenue. Last year, the company came in at No. 52 on the list.

To handle the sales growth, DPT has launched a sizable expansion program at its eight-building Maitland headquarters, where all the company's manufacturing takes place. The company recently finished doubling the size of one building to 20,000 square feet and has begun expanding another building from 6,000 to 16,000 square feet, which will bring the complex's total square footage to more than 65,000.

"We've been growing steadily ever since we were formed," Goldman says.

Not only is the company expanding locally, it continues to build its national and international presence by opening additional sales offices. DPT now operates satellite sales offices in Washington, D.C., England, Germany, Poland, Australia and Japan.

About half the company's products are sold to distributors, who in turn sell to resellers. The resellers then sell to the end users, which typically are businesses that operate sizable computer networks.

The rest of DPT's products are sold directly to other manufacturers, who use the computer peripherals in their own products.

Two of DPT's more well-known direct customers are Intel Corp., a maker of computer components, and Toshiba Corp., an electronics manufacturer.

Goldman and other industry observers estimate the worldwide market for computer peripherals at \$500 million-plus. And as computer networks become more prevalent -- and demand increases for computer servers that support Internet services -- the market likely will grow at unprecedented rates, they say.

Joel Shore, reviews editor of the weekly trade magazine Computer Reseller News, says DPT has done a good job of developing cutting-edge products before its competitors do.

"Steve Goldman is a real technologist," Shore says. "His vision has been to develop the products that are leading this market."

DPT's increasing emphasis on sales and marketing should help the company bring its technology to the masses, he says, adding, "Despite its excellent technology, DPT is not yet a household name. With stepped-up marketing and greater visibility, they can reach that plateau."

A representative of Clearwater-based Tech Data Corp., a reseller that carries DPT products, characterizes DPT's name recognition differently.

"They're one of the very best-known (disk) controller companies," says Dale Ott, director of product marketing for the mass storage division of Tech Data. "Their products are very well-recognized. They're asked for by name, and to get that kind of recognition is not a small feat in this industry."

Tech Data, a NASDAQ-traded computer equipment wholesaler with nearly \$3 billion in annual revenue, sells between \$300,000 and \$400,000 of DPT products a month, Ott says.

DPT, he adds, is "a good company, a bunch of class-act folks."

Fewer than six companies compete seriously with DPT, including Adaptec Inc. of Milpitas, Calif., and Mylex Corp. of Fremont, Calif., both of which are publicly traded and larger than DPT.

Goldman established DPT in 1977 as a division of [J. Goldman](#) Co., a mechanical contractor founded by his father, Sig Goldman. DPT broke off from S.I. Goldman in 1986, a year when the fledgling technology company generated \$1 million in sales -- only slightly more than 2 percent of its annual sales today.

One of the most difficult things about running his company, Steve Goldman says, is finding the right employees. (The company employs 225). DPT spent about \$100,000 over the past year recruiting people with the technical skills needed to develop disk controllers and other components for increasing the efficiency of computer networks.

"The products we make are unique," Goldman says. "Our niche in the market is with high-end products, though that's not to mean they are expensive." DPT products range in price from about \$300 to a few thousand dollars.

The products make sure users connected to a computer network have quick access to data stored by the system. Also, the products protect the flow of information with so-called fault-tolerant architecture.

"People's entire companies are relying on these things working," Goldman says.

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