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SMALL BUSINESS

Big plans, quick start

Wedding planners take their skills to corporate events

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Sikky Rogers and Angela Gala faced a quandary few new companies experience: Their event-planning firm, Rogers & Gala Creative Partners Inc., was swamped with business from the day it started.

The two women each had run wedding-planning companies, and they thought their joint venture could provide similar services for local companies and organizations.

They hit the jackpot almost immediately, landing the 2004 Wachovia Championship as Rogers & Gala's first client. Using contacts they had made in the wedding-planning arena, the duo was hired to create elegant, private areas in the Quail Hollow Club ballroom where PGA Tour players and their guests could dine and relax during the tournament.

The high-profile job was complicated by this factor: Gala was pregnant with twins at the time, with the babies due three weeks after the tourney.

"I was afraid she was going to deliver during the event," Rogers recalls.

The ability to adjust quickly has proved crucial to the success of the firm, which has added a string of corporate clients during the past year, handling similar event-planning duties for this year's Wachovia Championship.

"A well-planned event is not a well-oiled machine," Gala says. "With so many humans involved, something's going to happen. If you can't think on your feet, it's over."

She started her own business, Gala's Fine

QUICKINFO

ROGERS & GALA CREATIVE PARTNERS INC.

Business: Arranges corporate and social events

Founded: 2003

HQ: 1830 Queens Road West, Charlotte, 28207

Principals: Sikky Rogers and Angela Gala

Employees: 3

Phone: (704) 375-9431

Web site: www.rogersandgala.com



photo SEAN BUSHNER

BIG EVENTS: Angela Gala, left, and Sikky Rogers hope to expand Rogers & Gala Creative Partners by landing five or six corporate clients that need special events arranged on a year-round basis.

Weddings and Events, in 2000, after several years as catering director at the Charlotte City Club. Rogers, meanwhile, had run her wedding-planning firm since 1987.

"We've grown faster than we thought we would," Rogers says.

The partners decline to disclose details of Rogers & Gala's financial results, but they say revenue grew 50% last year and is on track to do so again this year.

Contacts from their wedding clients continue to help them land corporate jobs. "The trust is already there," Gala says.

Plus, it's often easier to arrange a corporate event than to handle those duties for a wedding, Rogers

adds. "The level of emotion is just not there."

This past spring, Rogers & Gala's expertise paid off for an international conference of La Confrerie de Chevaliers du Tastevin, a wine-connoisseur organization. Rogers & Gala arranged evening dinners and transportation for events at the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, the Duke Mansion, Charlotte Country Club and the homes of local members.

"There is no question the affair would not have occurred without Sikky's and Angela's organization," says Billy Clark, a local organizer of the wine conference. "They and their staff were in attendance for everything and were problem-solving at every juncture."