

July 23, 2011

Help from a healer

Andrea Smith first launched her business, Nutris, in November 2010.

A business mentor advised Smith it would take one, to one-and-one-half years, to build her business and establish three to four regular clients.

Nutris, a certified legal nurse-consulting firm in Valencia, reviews and prepares an exhaustive summary of medical records for the legal community.

By May 2011, only six months later, Nutris has already worked on 24 cases, and regularly works with eight attorneys.

Smith's first client was her biggest business booster — Owen, Patterson & Owen, a 34-year personal injury law firm based in Valencia.

"Rick Patterson read the article that day and called me," Smith said of the business profile story which was published in The Signal in late November.

Smith has worked with the law firm ever since. There are so many attorneys in his office and everyone, including the paralegals, has really embraced me as part of his team, she said.

Patterson also credits the article he read as leading to his firm's relationship with Nutris.

"She's very organized, personable and professional in her actions with us and our clients," Patterson said. And Andrea is dependable and reliable as far as her time frames, he said.

"I know she worked over a weekend to get one of our jobs done," Patterson said.
The case?

The Chatsworth Metrolink commuter train crash of Sept. 12, 2008, resulted in more than 100 injuries and 25 deaths. It was reported as the deadliest accident in Metrolink's history.

With a total cap of \$200 million to award all victims and families of the crash, fighting for an award on behalf of an individual was a tough sell for any law firm.

But Owen, Patterson & Owen persevered, and won, with the assistance of Nutris services.
"The injured party received \$3 million," Smith said.

While the bulk of Nutris's business has come through the SCV bar association, the opportunity to have Owen, Patterson & Owen as a client helped the business, Smith said. The law firm's association with Nutris lent credibility.

"Andrea is very bright, a scholarly nurse with practical experience," Patterson said.

Smith went through all the medical records and created an organized, detailed timeline and record of all the events, doctors and treatment, he said.

Then we asked her to put together a narrative — tell the story — to help one understand how the individual suffered, as demonstrated in the medical records, what future medical care might be, what impact on this person going forward and more.

"She was able to take reams of medical records, full of stats and repetitive information and find the kernels of information that helped demonstrate the suffering that person experienced in a way those deciding could relate to," Patterson said.