

# Finders Key Purse® creator turns to HP to support her growing business

Citing reliability, performance and overall value, Alexx Inc. uses HP Compaq Business Desktop PCs, a ProLiant server and LaserJet printers to build its rapidly expanding IT infrastructure



## Alexx, Inc.

“I am so happy that I don’t need to spend time worrying about our desktop PCs or printers or servers. I know that with HP our data is secure and our business is running smoothly.”

– Sandy Stein, founder and CEO, Alexx Inc.

HP customer case study: Alexx Inc. chooses HP for reliability, performance

Industry: Consumer goods

### Objective:

Woman-owned small business needed reliable, high-performance technology hardware to support its rapidly growing customer base and operations

### Approach:

Equip the office with HP business desktop PCs, server and printers, supported by secure offsite storage

### IT improvements:

- HP provides fast, on-site service in the event of a problem

### Business benefits:

- High-performance HP hardware allows business to grow without requiring frequent upgrades
- Easy integration of additional HP products as the company grows and changes
- Service from a provider that understands the needs of small businesses

Like countless others, Sandy Stein was inspired by a dream to start her own business. In her case, it was literally that – a dream in which her deceased father, Alex, spoke to her and encouraged her to create a product that enabled women to help other women.

“I wanted to create something that women needed, but it would be something that women could sell themselves, a way of starting their own business from home, to help make ends meet or even pursue a new career opportunity,” says Stein.

Thus, Alexx Inc. was born.

### HP supports small business environment

Stein developed and patented the Finders Key Purse®, a decorative key ring that attaches to a purse and makes it easy to locate keys. Once the product was ready for manufacturing and Stein began to set up her office, the need for reliable technology became paramount.

“My good friend Liz Curran joined me to help run the business, especially the operations side of things,” says Stein. “Liz is a guru when it comes to crunching numbers and managing the office. She insisted that we use HP products from day one.”

With the guidance and help of technology vendor ABTek Solutions, Stein and Curran installed HP business desktop PCs, several HP LaserJet printers and an HP ProLiant ML330 Server. According to Curran, HP equipment in the office helps legitimize the business – Alexx Inc. employees are confident knowing that their computers and printers will work well and help get the job done.

“I’m not afraid of technology,” Curran says. “And I think I’m realistic in terms of what technology can deliver, and anticipating areas where we need to upgrade. But I don’t want technology in the office to



## Customer at a glance

### About Finders Key Purse

In December of 2004, Alexx Inc. launched its first series of Finders Key Purse key rings in select retail stores across California. Since that time, the company's products have expanded to all fifty states and several overseas markets. As the company continues to grow, its product offerings have grown too.

To learn more, visit [www.finderskeypurse.com](http://www.finderskeypurse.com).

Contact the HP Customer Reference Program, 281-514-5755, for more information.

become a burden or create problems. I wanted reliable PCs and printers and servers that performed well, but weren't overpriced. I had experience with HP printers and PCs in previous jobs, and I knew they were the right fit."

All of the company's customer and business data resides on the server – making it the single most important piece of technology in the office, according to Curran.

"If our server goes down, our business goes down. Reliability is essential. That's why I insisted we use only HP," she notes.

### IT made easy

Finders Key Purse was an instant success, and Stein and Curran quickly found themselves absorbed with various marketing and operations tasks to support the growing business. To help manage information technology within the office, they turned to an outside source, ABTek Solutions. Adam Bohn, owner and president of ABTek, recognized that Alexx Inc. was a fast-growing company that needed a scalable solution in order to accommodate quick, seamless upgrades.

"HP was the right platform," he says. "I manage and maintain all of the technology hardware for Sandy and Liz, and having HP products in place translates into reliability. It's also a simple process to add more HP business desktop PCs or upgrade the server when the time comes. There aren't many service calls, and if HP is needed on-site, the warranty service we have insures that someone will be there in a matter of hours."

As a woman-owned business, Alexx Inc. has faced certain obstacles such as gender bias. Stein and Curran overcame these challenges in part by carefully choosing their vendors and partners. Curran pointed out that Bohn's assistance has been nothing less than spectacular.

"We adore him," she says. "We've faced our share of challenges in getting this business off the ground, but working with ABTek hasn't been one of them. He is 100 percent supportive, and his recommendations, including his support for HP products, have been great. He treats us the way we should be treated."

One issue that Bohn has outlined for Alexx Inc. is the need to accommodate the company's growing database. More customers, more products and global connectivity mean more megabytes consumed.

"The current server is working well, but eventually we'll need to move to a larger scale HP solution," he says. "One thing I really appreciate is Sandy's willingness to integrate strong technology into the business model and leverage it to always be a step ahead of the competition. It lets them focus more on the business and less on the technology. The IT plugs away in the background, supporting the great work that they are doing."

### Woman-owned business thrives with HP

According to Stein, Finders Key Purse is more than just a product; it's a brand – and a fast-growing one at that.

"We doubled our revenue in the past year, and we tripled it the year before," she says. "And now we're getting our products into markets all over the world. Growth, and the best ways to manage that growth, is always on our minds."

The company's business model is simple yet highly effective: they only sell wholesale, to retailers and catalog specialists. They have a team of 600 independent sales representatives – nearly all of them women – who pitch the product and earn a commission on sales. The company has recently moved into the UK, Australia and South Africa markets, with plans for more international growth in coming years. Managing that growth occupies a large portion of Stein's workday. She also noted that her main concern regarding computer technology was having a means of tracking sales and commissions and making sure everything flows smoothly.

"I am so happy that I don't need to spend time worrying about our desktop PCs or printers or servers," she says. "I know that with HP our data is secure and our business is running smoothly. I'm a seller, not a techie. Being able to focus on managing our growth and developing new products is a blessing."

To learn more, visit [www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)

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