

With new owner, ProfitFuel expects to double its Austin workforce

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Local search engine marketing services company ProfitFuel Inc. has been acquired by online marketer Yodle, a move that officials say will bring hundreds of new jobs to Austin over the next 18 months.

The head of New York-based Yodle said Tuesday that he plans to grow ProfitFuel, which helps small businesses improve their visibility on major search engines, into a major company hub.

Yodle CEO Court Cunningham called ProfitFuel a unique company with "incredible leadership."

"At the end of the day, companies win in the marketplace because of culture and team," he said. "That was first and foremost what attracted me to them."

ProfitFuel CEO David Rubin, who will join Yodle as senior vice president of sales, said his 220-employee company will more than double in size in the next 18 months. The new jobs will come in sales, client services and staff, he said.

"I really think it's a combination that's going to work great," he said of the acquisition.

Terms of the deal weren't disclosed.

The acquisition is a move by Yodle to attract a wider variety of clients, including companies with smaller marketing budgets.

ProfitFuel has targeted businesses that spend less than \$500 a month on marketing, and Yodle typically has targeted those on the larger end, officials said.

Combined, the two companies will have about 22,000 clients, making Yodle among the largest companies of its kind, officials said.

With that many clients, there is an information advantage: As search engine algorithms change, the company can run tests on large numbers of clients to see what's most effective, Rubin said.

"We're able to gather information about what's happening in the marketplace at a speed and depth that I think other people have trouble matching," he said.

Yodle had 300 employees and revenues of almost \$46 million in 2009, according to Inc. Magazine, which named it 35th on a 2010 list of fastest-growing private U.S. companies.

ProfitFuel has also grown quickly, having doubled its number of employees in the last 12 months.

Part of the reason for growth is the company's culture, Rubin said. That includes daily chef-prepared lunches, a game room and weekly visits from a masseur.

"Frankly, Yodle's culture is fantastic as well," Rubin said. "The cultures were so similar."