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San Clemente business rated fastest growing in county

FireSocket analyzes customer satisfaction with online software, leading pack in sales growth.

By ANDREW GOOD
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SAN CLEMENTE — Scan your eyes over the list of fastest growing Orange County companies, and you'll see plenty of entries from Irvine.

But when professional service firm Deloitte & Touche issued their Technology Fast 50 last month, measuring quick growth in the past five years, San Clemente's FireSocket was at the top.

It was an honor, certainly, says CEO Jonathan Ord, who started the online customer relationship management service with business partner Brad Perry in 2002. Like other CRMs, FireSocket helps track customer experience – everything from sales to complaints to follow-ups. It's all done online, where a specialized program charts every interaction a customer has with a company.

They specialize in providing for automotive dealerships and insurance companies right now, with a mortgage-specific branch due to launch in first quarter next year.

They've been so busy in the past five years, Ord said, that the Deloitte award took them by surprise.

"From a company perspective we bootstrapped this," he explains. "We have no venture capital funding. We have no external investment. We have no debt — all our data center equipment is owned by us.

"When Deloitte gave us the award, we were able to take a step back and say, man, this is cool, 'we've accomplished something.' Then the next day we just go back to work."

With just over 50 employees, many of them San Clemente locals, FireSocket has grown 6180 percent since launching. Talk to Ord about its early days, and there's a hint of relief in his voice: After deciding to start the company, Ord and Perry took a year off, working for free to study customer interaction in automotive dealerships. After copious note-taking and pestering employees with questions, they knew enough to specialize in serving that industry's customers.

