

FORTUNE

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100

FASTEST

GROWING

COMPANIES

Featuring

#69 Signature Bank

FORTUNE'S 100 FASTEST-GROWING COMPANIES

METHODOLOGY: To qualify, a company—foreign or domestic—must be trading on a major U.S. stock exchange; report data in U.S. dollars; file quarterly reports with the SEC; have a minimum market capitalization of \$250 million and a stock price of at least \$5 on June 30, 2011; and have been trading continuously since June 30, 2008. Companies must have revenue and net income of at least \$50 million and \$10 million, respectively, for the four quarters ended on or before April 30, 2011, and have posted an annualized growth in revenue and earnings per share of at least 15% annually over the three years ended on or before April 30, 2011. Companies that meet these criteria are ranked by revenue growth rate, EPS growth rate, and three-year annualized total return for the period ended June 30, 2011. [To compute the revenue and EPS growth rates, Fortune uses a trailing four quarters log linear least square regression fit.] The overall rank is based on the sum of

the three ranks. Once the 100 companies are identified, they are then re-ranked within the 100, using the three equally weighted variables. If there is a tie, the company with the larger four-quarter revenue receives the higher rank. Excluded are real estate investment trusts, limited-liability companies, limited partnerships, companies about to be acquired, and companies that lost money in the quarter ended on or before April 30, 2011. In addition, Fortune excludes companies that have announced intentions to restate previous reported financial data, if these errors appear to have a significant impact. Also, Fortune excludes companies that lost money in the quarter ended May 31 or June 30, if the loss represents a deterioration in business conditions. The data are provided by Zacks Investment Research. The data process was aided by information provided by Compustat, Hoover's, Thomson Reuters, and Morningstar Document Research.

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FASTEST-GROWING COMPANIES IN TROUBLED INDUSTRIES

THE RECESSION HIT CERTAIN INDUSTRIES HARDER THAN OTHERS, BUT A FEW CRAFTY FIRMS MANAGED TO OVERCOME TOUGH TIMES.

Signature Bank

IT'S UNLIKELY that you'll ever walk into a Signature Bank off the street or see an advertisement for the company at a ball game. Unlike First Financial, Signature has practically avoided brand exposure since it started back in 2001.

Instead the bank relies on hiring experienced bankers with a portfolio of clients who refer other customers by word of mouth. Signature deals exclusively with private companies in the New York area — a section of the population that has grown frustrated with big banks, says CEO Joe DePaolo.

New York private business owners want one point of contact to streamline all of their financial needs, he says. So that's what Signature offers. Clients can call their same banker for advice about buying a vacation home as well as securing a line of credit for their business. Signature employees are on call all the time to answer questions quickly, to jibe with the pace of a New York entrepreneur.

Customers like it. The bank, which has grown to \$13.1 billion in assets since it started in 2001, continues to expand. This past quarter, Signature's net income grew 64% to \$36.6 million.

And as long as big banks continue to frustrate customers, DePaolo sees room to keep growing. There's no outsourced call or automated bank robot behind the company's formula for success. "You know what the formula is?" he says. "Answer the damn phone."

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SIGNATURE BANK