



## 2007 BANK OF HAWAII COMMUNITY LEADER OF THE YEAR

# Alan Akina measures success by helping others

BY CHARLOTTE WOOLARD  
PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

**A**lan Akina does not run 101 Financial Group from an office.

Instead, he meets his managers at a coffee shop near Honolulu International Airport, sipping green tea at one of the narrow tables before a flight to Kauai, Maui or the Big Island.

The founder of the financial management company doesn't dress up before a presentation and doesn't advertise the Web site or events in the newspaper or on radio or television.

He doesn't need to. His self-made business model has seen a five-agent operation grow to about 150 agents in five years, a word-of-mouth feat underscored by his staff-recruitment tactics.

"We hired our best clients to work for us," he said. "We didn't hire any professional sales guys."

Akina stretches his time between communities on each of the islands, taking his financial management system to middle-income families.

"No shame," he tells the people who gather to hear his presentations. "Everybody has debt, and we have to attack it and not be afraid of it."

His presentation doesn't involve any grandstanding.

"I just sit down and talk story with them; this is the most dressed up I'll get," he said, pointing to his slacks and logo shirt.

A friend looking for capital brought the debt-elimination system to Akina.

"When I saw this program, I was like, hey, this can help my family," he said.

He applied the system to his parents' debt, which included a high-interest car loan that had more than three years of payments remaining. In day-by-day increments and using existing bank programs, the system helped them pay the car off in one year.

Akina was hooked.

"It's never been about the money for me," he said. "It was more about helping other people."

He sold the telecommunications and e-commerce companies that he was then running and put all of his savings behind the new company.

Akina has a history of launching successful companies, having thrown his weight behind five initiatives since 1994. But he never studied business during his time at Brigham Young University Hawaii.

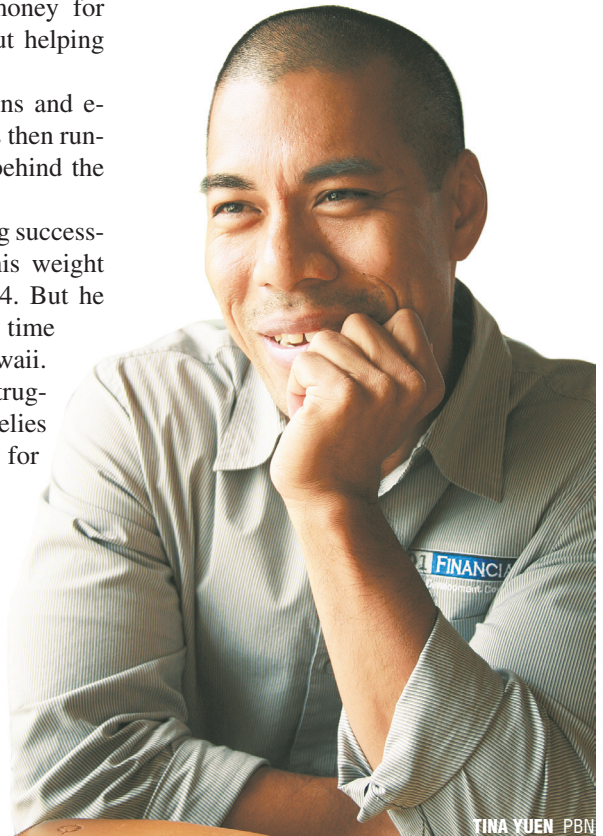
"A lot of times I find myself struggling," he said, noting that he relies on friends and how-to books for guidance.

That struggle has earned the former BYU Hawaii basketball star the attention of the university's business faculty. He serves as a volunteer guest speaker, panelist, lecturer and judge for the school of business and international entrepreneurship.

"Alan and his company have been helping hundreds of local families across the state of Hawaii to organize their financial lives," said Gregory V. Gibson, director of the Willes Center for International Entrepreneurship at BYU. "Words cannot express the impact that he is having on people's lives."

The father of four — soon to be five — also is an assistant basketball coach at Mililani High School, where the coaching staff includes both his father and uncle. The Eagle Scout serves as a Boy Scout leader and says the organization's creed has overlapped into his business philosophy.

"I was charged to give back more to the program than it's given me," he said. "I charge my agents to do the same."



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**Alan Akina**, found success by helping people out of their money troubles.



**Alan Akina, 37**  
Founder, President and CEO,  
101 Financial Group

That creed also comes into play with Akina's education. He left BYU a few credits shy of a degree, taking time off to focus on his first company, Native Hawaiian Wear. He hopes to complete his studies this year, wedging study hours into family and work time.

"I want to set the example for the kids," he said, pointing out that he received scholarships for his education. "Pay back everybody who got me where I am."