



Re: Oregon Growth Board

15 years ago, Marquam Group was founded in Texas, by 5 very young, ambitious, smart, hardworking and indeed inexperienced entrepreneurs. Three had graduated from Rice University, one from Princeton. I hailed from Oregon State University and was the only Oregonian.

Why Texas? Because we needed financing and there was a small community bank willing to take the risk. I can't be certain, but we may be the only technology company founded with financing collateralized by a 500 head of family cattle.

As all of our growth occurred outside of Texas, we needed to move the company headquarters and our choices were either Chicago or Portland. Again, financing was the critical factor. As a young technology services company with a short track record, few doors were opening. Here in Oregon we found another community bank willing to extend a certain amount of credit, but required more equity to consummate a deal with a small group of unknown twenty-somethings. Without many options, we secured \$35,000 of "Parent Equity Funding" that secured a \$30,000 operating line at a local community bank and Marquam Group became an Oregon company. Had we found financing anywhere else, that's where we would be today.

Six "Fastest Growing Company" awards, three recessions, two successful sales of business divisions, four banks and one "Oregon's Best Companies to Work For" award later we continue to operate and grow here in Oregon. It hasn't always been easy and it never will be easy for new businesses to germinate, take root and grow into to sustainable enterprises. It shouldn't be.

But the Oregon Growth Board has the potential to help young companies enduring that road. Success in that endeavor can be remarkable. Our initial capitalization of \$65,000 has contributed over \$24 million in payroll into the State of Oregon to date. Those loans have long since been repaid, but our contribution to Oregon's economy is ongoing.

It almost didn't happen here. If the state is serious about economic development in the 21st century entrepreneurs, start-ups and growth stage companies must be an area of focus. Access to capital - both financial and intellectual are **the** fuel for entrepreneurial fire. By attracting and supporting the capital environment, Oregon has the opportunity to wield tremendous economic development leverage.

I strongly encourage the continued implementation and funding of the Oregon Growth Board to accomplish that goal.

Chad Layman

CEO | Marquam Group

chad.layman@marquam.com