



NEWS

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Software firm founder credits FastTrack for success

(Stamford Advocate, The (Stamford, CT) (KRT) Via Acquire Media NewsEdge) May 1--Alison Malloy and her Stamford software company, Design2Launch Inc., were on the state's "fast track." After selling her company to Eastman Kodak Co., she's now offering her expertise to other businesses on the rise.

Less than a month after selling for \$20 million the company she founded in 1999, Malloy was a featured speaker yesterday at this year's FastTrack Program in Stamford, an organization of startup companies identified by the Connecticut Technology Council as having high growth potential.

About a dozen companies were on hand at the Stamford offices of Edwards, Angell, Palmer & Dodge LLP to hear about Malloy's experiences in starting the company, finding investors, nearly going bankrupt and eventually selling the business to Kodak, where it's now known as Kodak's Corporate Solutions Group.

Malloy credited FastTrack and the mentoring and advisory services it provides members for helping her grow and garner her \$20 million windfall.

"This is such a phenomenal group," said Malloy, who had phoned one of her mentors when an offer was first made to buy Design2Launch last year. "They told me to go for it."

Under Malloy's leadership, the company provided graphic management software targeting the pharmaceutical, food, automotive and consumer packaging industries.

Liddy Karter, program director for FastTrack and the head of Karter Capital Group in Old Lyme, said it's important for the honored companies, picked from a pool of more than 700 businesses, to utilize the group's resources.

"Think of us as a useful incubator," she said. "We'll help you develop connections with various service providers ... and we'll try to help you with the hardest thing of all -- connecting you with customers."

A number of industries were represented at the program, including software developers, communications specialists and human resources consultants.

"Thank you for being part of Connecticut's new economy," said Matthew Nemerson, president and chief executive officer of the technology council.

In the past, "we relied on big companies to help us grow, and that's not going to happen anymore," he said. "The state is beginning to realize that the only way Connecticut is going to compete is to look forward. You're paving the road for us."

Trailblazers include Shelton-based HR411.com, a human resources provider that has watched its client-base rise from a few hundred to nearly 25,000 the past year, said Michael Pires, president and chief executive officer.

"We like to think of ourselves as a Home Depot of human resources -- we have everything you need -- from your ground floor to the roof," Pires said. "It's very important that we help Connecticut and its economy thrive here."

Douglas McPheters said his company, HoloTouch in Stamford, has been able to thrive with FastTrack's help.

A FastTrack member for two years, HoloTouch provides touchless, holographic images of controls for electronic equipment.

FastTrack and the technology council helped get McPheters' unique product an audience.

"For starters, they put me in touch with someone who has been a useful mentor," McPheters said. "They occasionally get me opportunities to show my product on TV. I'll take almost anything I can get."

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