

## Backgrounder

In 2014, Kitsap Bank created a small business competition called edg3 FUND. edg3 FUND's Mission? To provide funding for entrepreneurs dedicated to growing our community **economically, socially or environmentally**.



Kitsap Bank's edg3 FUND (rhymes with hedge fund) small business competition was created to recognize small businesses doing great things in our community. As a family-owned community bank, we understand the unique challenges faced by small businesses. One of the biggest barriers for entrepreneurs can be a lack of funding. Most are not eligible for traditional bank financing when they are just starting out. Many entrepreneurs turn to loans from family or friends, or they take on credit card debt. Kitsap Bank set out to help fill that funding gap for a deserving local business through this competition, and connect entrepreneurs to other resources that can help them in their journeys.

We opened the contest to businesses in Western Washington, looking for companies that have fresh ideas, are committed to creating sustainable communities, and have a clear vision of where they are going and what they want to achieve. We had a wish list for the winning company:

- The \$20,000 cash prize will be a game-changer for the company selected as the winner of our inaugural event.
- We want to be able to follow the winner over the next 12 months to see how the \$20,000 was invested, and what measurable impacts were achieved.
- We are looking for someone who will provide an excellent example of what our program can potentially do for a small business and as a result, the community we all serve.

## Concept - Launch

The edg3 FUND small business competition was announced on Earth Day, as part of Kitsap Bank's sustainability program. Over the past two years, the bank has identified various ways in which we would like to become a more sustainable company, organizing a Green Team (G Team) of approximately 30 employees and setting goals for consistent improvements. The G Team is divided into three committees: Shamrock Committee focuses on internal activities—paper reduction, waste reduction, energy savings, recycling program, etc. Emerald Committee is dedicated to the education and specialization of employees and creation of bank products and services to support sustainable business practices—ie, loans that specifically address the need of retrofitting a building or business, understanding grant programs and incentives for businesses to become more sustainable, and so on. The Spring Committee directs its efforts outwardly to the community. This is where the edg3 FUND small business competition was

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Tony George, Kitsap Bank  
President and Chief Operating  
Officer.

originated and implemented. It is the first major initiative of this G Team committee.

### Applicants - Semi-Finalists

Kitsap Bank opened its inaugural edg3 FUND small business competition on June 2, 2014. The six week application period yielded approximately 70 applicants from throughout Western Washington. The competition attracted a variety of unique businesses—a salmon company that delivers their product by bicycle, a company making soap from reclaimed restaurant oil, a handcrafted probiotic foods producer, and more. A committee of bank personnel plus three independent business people reviewed the initial applications and convened to select 10-15 semi-finalists. Due to a tied opinion, the panel decided to put forward 16 semi-finalists. Although some really great businesses didn't make it through, a few went on to compete in other small business competitions using the skills they gained in the edg3 FUND competition. Independent semi-final judges included: Dee Coppola, PhD, Co-Owner/Operator WetApple Media; Jon Rose, President, Olympic Property Group; and Teri Bellamy, Finance Executive/Business Consultant.

### Public Vote - Finalists

The 16 semi-finalists' corporate backgrounds and video pitches were featured on Kitsap Bank's web site and social media for two weeks from August 1-15, and the public was invited to vote for their favorite company. Thousands of votes were cast to determine the top five finalists.

### Edg3 FUND Live

Five finalists presented their pitches before a live audience and independent panel of judges on September 10, 2014 at Kitsap Conference Center at Harborside.

<b>Monica's Waterfront Bakery &amp; Café</b>	<b>Silverdale, WA</b>
<b>Moonlight Farm</b>	<b>Quilcene, WA</b>
<b>OlyKraut</b>	<b>Olympia, WA</b>
<b>Pawzii, Inc.</b>	<b>Seattle, WA</b>
<b>With Respect</b>	<b>Port Orchard, WA</b>

### Independent Panel of Judges

We were honored to have the assistance of three esteemed members of the Greater Puget Sound business community, successful entrepreneurs and accomplished professionals in their own right. Our independent panel of judges included:

**David Giuliani**, Co-Founder Washington Business Alliance; Co-founder/CEO and chief inventor of the Sonicare company, sold to Philips. Co-founder/CEO of Clarisonic company, sold to L'Oreal in 2011.

**John Eisenhauer**, Founder/CEO & CTO Kombi Corporation; Founder/President Mercury Online Solutions, Inc. acquired by 3M Corporation in 2005.

**Steve Rice**, Senior Principal Architect, LEED AP Rice Fergus Miller Architects, Platinum LEED Project earned 93 LEED points—one of only four worldwide.

### And the Winner is...?

Pawzii, Inc., an online pet licensing product, was named the \$20,000 winner. This innovative company is focused on redefining how pet owners adopt, license, and protect their pets. Based out of Seattle, they work closely with local municipalities to make it simple to license your pet online, which is the safest protection against losing your pet. Currently, Pawzii is assisting the Kitsap Humane Society, Seattle Animal Shelter, Regional Animal Services of King County,



and Pierce County to sell pet licenses online. With the \$20,000, Pawzii plans to develop additional technology and scale the business to a wider audience. They've also used the prize money to become a certified B Corporation, a newer type of corporation that utilizes the power of business to solve social and environmental problems.

### Marketing and Branding an Inaugural Competition

Kitsap Bank built the edg3 FUND competition from the ground up entirely internally. A small group of employees met regularly, and were responsible for coming up with the name, guidelines, timeline, format of the competition, and much more. In-house creative designed the logo and branding.

Kitsap Bank utilized an integrated marketing approach in order to build visibility for the competition in its inaugural year:

- **Social Media (campaigns, advertising, app for voting)**
- **Newsprint and Journal Advertising (announcement, call for applicants, event promotion, winner announcement)**
- **Website (event page, contest information, competitor information, integration with social media)**
- **Videography (7 videos produced: contest promotion video, 30 second spots for five finalists, wrap-up video)**
- **Press Releases (announcement, semi-finalist announcement, five finalists and live event, competition winner)**
- **Email Marketing (reaching out to area non-profits, environmental and sustainability groups, economic and business development organizations, colleges and universities)**
- **Branch Merchandising (Posters, flyers, promotional cards, reader boards)**
- **Event Sponsorships (Washington Business Alliance, Washington Water Trust, KEDA)**

- **Event Presentations (Chamber meetings, Seattle Go Green Conference, Rotary meetings, Office Xpats, Kitsap Business Forum, Green Drinks organizations)**

### **Only the Beginning**

Since the conclusion of edg3 FUND 2014, Kitsap Bank has continued to receive positive feedback about the event from customers, media partners, shareholders, and the general public. The event has also helped us connect with other like-minded organizations in the sustainable business community. Plans are already underway for edg3 FUND 2015, which will be even bigger and better than the inaugural event. The live event is scheduled for November 12, 2015 at Kitsap Conference Center in Bremerton.

**Who will win the \$20,000?**