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San Francisco Business Times - July 9, 2007

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Entrepreneur profile

Greg Kennedy

Occidental Power

San Francisco Business Times - July 6, 2007

Title: General manager, founder.

HQ: San Francisco.

2006 Revenue: \$2 million.

Number of employees: 12.

Year founded: 1989.

Source of startup capital: vendor credit.

Background: Graduated from Occidental College; worked for BC Electric, Solar Center, Trident Energy Systems.

Age: 51.

Residence: San Francisco.

Web site: oxypower.com

Big picture

Reason for starting business: I saw an opportunity to start a solar service company. Lots of solar companies were going out of business because of the end of the solar tax credit in 1985. I saw that eventually solar thermal and solar electric would come back, and I wanted to be in a position to be a part of that.

Most difficult part of decision: It's a matter of faith. You have to make that leap of faith, even though you don't know where the opportunity for work is coming in next few weeks.

Biggest plus of ownership: You certainly have a lot of your fate in your own hands. You're making your own decisions, all the risks and rewards are yours. It's exciting.

Biggest drawback: You become kind of myopic.

Biggest misconception: The challenge of managing a staff. It's a lot harder than I thought it would be in many ways. And how much time I think about insurance and making sure we have the right health plan. Those aren't the things that got me into this business.

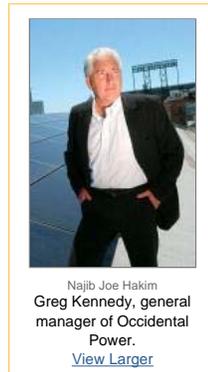
Biggest business strength: Passion for the field and a good knowledge of it.

Biggest business weakness: I haven't set up systems to grow -- not having a traditional business background, I tend to learn by doing. We're not as good at marketing. We've been spending a lot of money developing a business plan.

Biggest risk: Taking on different projects in the cogeneration field which utilities and powers that be haven't been favorable to over the years. Sometimes we've bitten off more than we can chew but we've been able to weather it.

Biggest mistake: Probably in the past, a little bit of arrogance about what it took to get things done and not realizing there were gaps in my knowledge.

Smartest move: Knowing our strength and that we are not trying to compete with the larger, more



highly financed solar companies. We're a high-end custom outfit.

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Biggest worry: Keeping the good people on board.

Top source of inspiration: My wife and daughters. Family is important.

Daily routine

Most challenging task: Just keeping up with communications these days.

Favorite task: Seeing sales figures continue to grow. Seeing solar trucks go out every day and come back every night.

Least favorite task: Fretting about about cash flow.

Biggest frustration: Bureaucracy, the second greatest force on earth, after gravity. It's a necessary evil.

Source of support in a business crisis: My attorney, who's also one of my best friends.

Dreams

Key goal yet to achieve: We'd like to own our own property.

First move with capital windfall: Buy a building for the business. Invest in the business to make it stronger.

Five-year plan: We have to grow. We've had 100 percent growth from this time last year to this year, and 30-40 percent growth over the last few years.

Inducement to sell: We've been approached quite a bit by these companies that do rollups, but we've declined.

First choice for new career or venture: Getting involved in something with a social and environmental leaning.

Personals

Most-admired entrepreneur: Eddie Rickenbacker, who started Eastern Airlines and was America's No. 1 flying ace in World War I.

Stress reducers: Tennis, surfing.

Favorite pastimes: Backpacking and canoe trips.

Favorite book: "Land of Lincoln," by Andrew Ferguson.

Favorite film: "The Maltese Falcon."

Favorite restaurant: Park Chalet.

Favorite destination: Eastern Europe.

Automobile: A Silverado pickup and a Prius.

-- Elizabeth Browne

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