

# Making Rapid Progress

## Young Companies Reach Key Milestones

**T**he pace of entrepreneurial development often doesn't match the energy and effort expended by the entrepreneurs.

It's no secret that those working to establish and grow young companies must bring determination and countless hours of planning and execution to the table. The payoffs from their strength and passion must seem painfully slow at times.

For Griffin Analytical Technologies and Arxan Technologies, two Purdue Research Park companies first introduced in *BizVoice* at the beginning of this year, recent accomplishments are on the fast track. Company leaders can point to significant milestones as they build toward full establishment of the technology-based businesses that will be so important to the state's future.

### Griffin Analytical

The Super Bowl of analytical chemistry is an annual event known as PITTCON (formerly the Pittsburgh Conference). Orlando was the 2003 host and the result, according to Griffin co-founders Dennis Barket and Garth Patterson, was the "corporate coming out party" for their company.

Griffin Analytical is creating a miniaturized mass spectrometer, allowing chemical analysis to take place in the field at the same high level of quality only possible in the lab to this point. A slogan, which served as the backdrop for their popular booth and demonstration at PITTCON, reads: "Chemistry happens outside the lab ... so should analysis."

Barket and Patterson used a simple experiment to demonstrate the powerful capabilities of their technology. Visitors consumed one of two flavors (peppermint or wintergreen) of the popular LifeSavers candies, and then exhaled into a straw attached to the spectrometer. Within 30 seconds, chemical analysis revealed what flavor the person had eaten.

"We picked that experiment carefully," notes Patterson, explaining that one compound within the wintergreen is a simulant to a nerve agent. Department of Defense and other government experts among the convention crowd were, without doubt, aware of that similarity – and the importance of the real-time chemical analysis for security purposes.

The typical instrument in the field, according to Barket and Patterson, might have a 500-pound magnet as part of its components or be run by technicians with years of experience. Griffin Analytical used a software interface to provide on-site chemical information with the push of two buttons.

"(PITTCON) was an efficient way to see and be seen. We understand now who's practicing in our space," Barket contends. "We get to gauge where they're at and the pace they're going at. Potential customers and strategic partners saw us. It was a catalyst to a lot of interest and has fostered communications with potential strategic partners."

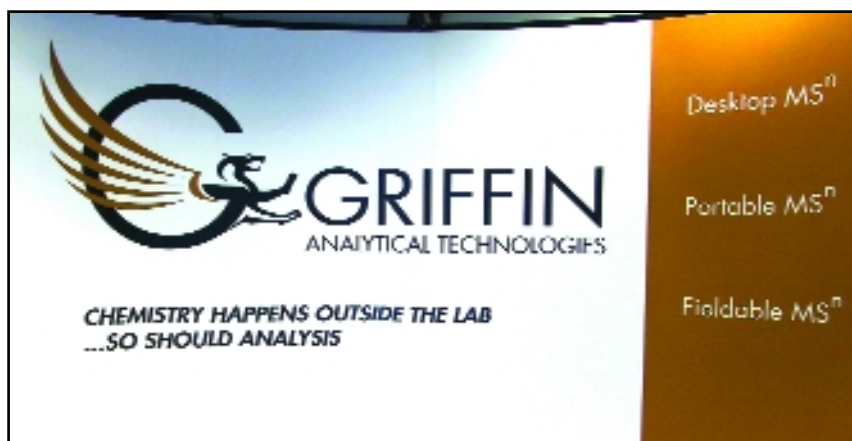
The successful conference showing was an important step toward the September target date for starting to ship units to customers. To reach that milestone, work continues in three areas: engineering and development, "ramping up" manufacturing ability and making sure intellectual property is in place.

### Money talks

Two other significant events have bolstered Griffin's progress. In mid-May, Rose-Hulman Ventures announced a \$500,000 investment in the company. In addition to the funding comes engineering-based projects in which the Rose-Hulman expertise will assist Griffin's product development.



Senior scientist Mitch Wells, Ph.D., does some testing with a prototype of the spectrometer.



## Arxan Technologies

Arxan's focus is software security. While funding needs produced venture capital from the West Coast and the eventual moving of the engineering staff to California, vice president Eric Davis is still overseeing growth in Indiana.

Six Purdue interns are performing essential research in conjunction with an expanded Air Force contract. Also, the first beta version of the company's Enforce-It product was released earlier this year, providing a boost to sales and development efforts.

"Until you actually have a product you can show people to sell, you don't really have a company," Davis reasons. "It's a very significant milestone. We're commercially verified and tested. In the early stages, your road map is almost as important as the product.

"You have to sell your road map to customers. You have to sell your road map to investors. You have to sell your road map to employees."

The development will continue at a rapid pace. A second beta version, incorporating feedback from the early users, will be released before the end of the year. The business plan/road map will continue to be a factor, supplemented by the actual product in use.

Also, Gov. O'Bannon visited the company as part of a statewide effort to tout his Energize Indiana plan. The administration proposal was eventually combined with other economic development initiatives. One of the key elements passing the legislature was \$75 million in funding over the next two years for the 21st Century Research & Technology Fund.

Patterson cites the integration of mechanical and electrical engineering systems as one of the essential projects that will be worked on at Rose-Hulman. If not for the agreement, the work would have been outsourced elsewhere.

"These (projects) are more developmentally oriented," he adds. "They don't directly influence the day-to-day operations here, but have long-term implications and meet well with their requirements for student involvement."

The working relationship could continue for years. Barket points out the significance of the company taking Purdue technology, capitalizing on a 21st Century grant (with an indirect connection to Indiana University) to assist in the business planning phase, receiving early stage seed funding from Purdue's TRASK fund and now forming the collaboration with Rose-Hulman Ventures.

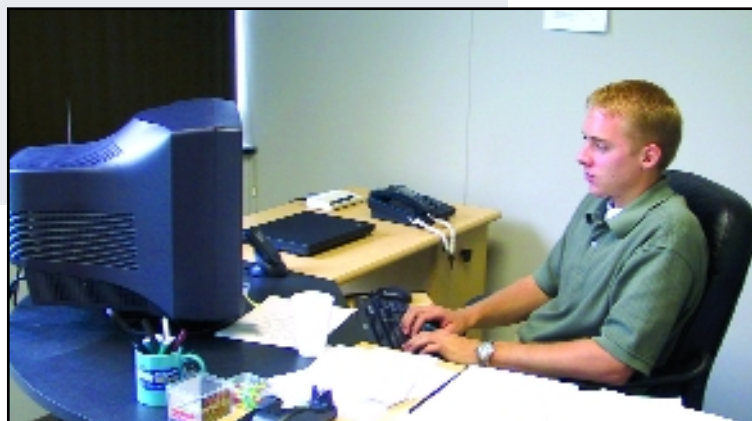
"It's a nice story with a broad statewide focus," Barket points out. "Rose-Hulman works in an academic environment, and we're used to that. That brings a level of comfort."

The \$500,000 will go toward general business development. While the funding is important – "money always leverages more money," Patterson claims – the message from the Rose-Hulman investment and the 21st Century resurrection is also crucial.

Barket says the legislative action "sends a good signal from the state of the importance of funding high-technology companies. What is vitally needed in this state is seed money for those companies already in existence. The money all builds on itself. The progression of growing a company is something that Indiana has to get comfortable with."

Griffin has been pushing toward the September product shipment date for more than a year. World events, and the defense need for on-site chemical analysis, would seem to be an incentive to accelerate that timetable.

"There is a push to move fast. It needs to be done quickly, particularly with homeland security. But it needs to be done correctly as well," Patterson concludes.



**Eric Bryant is serving as research engineer with Arxan Technologies.**

"The road map is subject to slight changes, but we'll stick to it pretty well," Davis contends. "With version one of any software, you don't have the feedback yet from customers. You often get suggestions that eventually make their way back into the product."

Customers, he adds, still want to see where the product is headed. If, for example, it were deployed in a Windows environment, some not only would like to see a MAC usage but when that next step will take place.

While still in the early stages, potential customer meetings take on a different feel with an actual product to show and results to tout. Helping improve those results and develop a strong product is the role of the Purdue students serving as interns.

*Continued on page 57*

## Rapid Progress

*Continued from page 30*

### Research focus

“They’re all working on the government contract (with the Air Force software protection center based at Wright-Patterson in Dayton, Ohio) to do software protection analysis,” Davis says. “They’re our test subjects. We give them problems to solve, using different techniques, and assess how long it takes to solve them.”

The Air Force has been pleased with the project thus far. Arxan will likely hire additional people, expanding geographically within Indiana to have access to more than Purdue students. For a company in the business of software security, it will understandably make its research projects securely available over the Internet, allowing mobile participation.

The work being done for the Air Force fills several needs and helps justify the existence of the Indiana operations of the company.

“The interns are essential. There would not be any progress at all without them,” according to Davis. “The research here is very relevant to what the company does. It’s beneficial to the company as well as our customer. That’s not always the case.”

#### INFORMATION LINK

**Resources:** Griffin Analytical Technologies at (765) 775-1701 or [www.griffinanalytical.com](http://www.griffinanalytical.com)

Arxan Technologies at (765) 775-1004 or [www.arxan.com](http://www.arxan.com)