



APTOS
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October 16, 2014

Dear Members of the Review Panel:

Santa Cruz, California and the surrounding Monterey Bay region's economy relies strongly on the health and vibrancy of local small businesses - the vast majority of employers in our region are small, locally owned businesses. As a local Community College, we rely extensively on partnerships with local businesses both to provide valuable input to our programs via industry advisory as well as internship and employment opportunities for our students as they navigate their education and career pathways.

Beyond measure, CEO Chris Miller and his small business ScratchSpace/Launch Brigade has proven to be an invaluable partner in this process. Not only does Chris and his colleagues offer input in how to improve our computer information systems courses to ensure that our students are competitive as they graduate and seek employment, ScratchSpace has been a leader in providing internship and work experience opportunities our students here at Cabrillo as well as the other two 4-year colleges in the region.

At a great expense to his company, Chris developed a workforce-training program at the ScratchSpace site that offered a free comprehensive course in advanced software development. In 2010, this program generated 10 alumni over the course of two semesters. Some of these students transitioned to regular employment with ScratchSpace while others went on to find success in their field "over the hill" (otherwise known as Silicon Valley). While this program proved to be incredibly successful, the up-front costs for implementing proved to be too great for a small business and had to be scaled back. This has not stopped Chris and the ScratchSpace folks from continuing to provide significant workforce training/internship opportunities in the years since; opportunities that continue to benefit students at our college and the community at large despite the difficulties in bringing it to scale.

ScratchSpace is a role model and leader in our community and utilizes the innovative, socially responsible, and holistic business framework known as Triple Bottom Line. A small business that prioritizes the environmental and social costs along with profits is absolutely essential to the sustainability of a healthy local economy and aligns wonderfully with the overall vision of the Mission Main Street Grant program. I strongly encourage the selection committee to consider awarding this grant to ScratchSpace. Without question, I am sure that this will only embolden the company to continue leading the pack when it comes to developing a comprehensive and competitive technology sector and enhancing the quality and abundance of local talent in Santa Cruz County.

Thank you for taking the time to review these applications and for creating an amazing economic development opportunity for small business leaders.

Sincerely,

Laurel Jones,
President, Cabrillo College