



first ascent ventures, llc

Virtual Founder ProgramSM

First time software entrepreneurs have many challenges to overcome in building a company and making it successful. When companies are at the earliest stages, without established revenue streams and without funding, sound decisions and strategies are extremely critical to maximize the potential for success as a business and attractiveness to future investors. Compounding the seed stage challenges, founders are working against the clock and a time window defined by how much personal savings or capital the founders have to live off of while they get the business started. Mistakes can be painful, and in many cases, avoided.

Help at this stage is often hard to come by. Governmental organizations and volunteer groups can provide some help, usually in a general business sense. The advice of professional service providers, both legal and financial, is critical but reality dictates a limited level of involvement due to cost constraints. Most entrepreneurs need more than this. To maximize the strategic value of a business to a future buyer, products need to be architected, designed, and built in a manner that maximizes the fit to larger software companies who operate in related markets. They need experienced start-up help that can evaluate business model trade-offs, identify strategic options, help find and locate key advisors, partners, and customers, and generally provide critical knowledge, advice, context, support, and introductions a new CEO needs during the early phases of the business.

First Ascent Ventures, LLC has launched a **Virtual Founder ProgramSM** specifically for seed stage software companies. Through this program, we help software entrepreneurs navigate these challenges and increase their chances of success. We build a close working relationship with the founding team to help develop the company and idea and maximize the opportunity to get revenue, customers, and funding. We structure a relationship directly and through our network that provides the required support without an up-front cash outlay. We will take a risk on the business, just like you. If funding is appropriate for the business, we will help evaluate the options, and then assist in adequately preparing to meet with investors. We are a true founding partner for your business.

First Ascent Ventures, LLC was founded by James D. St. Jean, an experienced senior software technology executive. Mr. St. Jean has worked for over 20 years in the software industry and has been a founder or founding member of 3 businesses, two of which were software companies that ended with successful acquisitions. At his most recent startup, White Spider Software Inc., Mr. St. Jean was founder and Chief Executive Officer. In addition to his startup experience, over the past 10 years Mr. St. Jean has held multiple senior executive positions with public Silicon Valley companies including Vice President Engineering and Chief Technology Officer. He has participated in more than 8 mergers and acquisitions on both the buying and selling sides. Mr. St. Jean has private equity investments in more than ten private companies and actively participates in the [Monadnock](#) and [Northeast](#) angel investment groups. He maintains a blog on software start-up issues at www.firstascentventures.com.

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