

# FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP



## EDC of Okaloosa Case Study:

In 1997, Vincent Mayfield, with his long time best friend Louis Erickson Jr., started laying the foundation for their own software engineering firm on a Chuck E. Cheese napkin at a children's birthday party in Fort Walton Beach. Vince and Louis wanted to build a company where innovation and creativity would flourish. The plan was well underway by 2006, with revenue and client growth necessitating the need for more staff and a move to a larger office atop Bank of America. By 2007, Bit-Wizards' client list had grown to include Fortune 2000 companies like Dow Chemical, Motorola, and General Dynamics. Also in that timeframe, the company became more involved with website development and digital marketing. In 2009, after developing Microsoft solutions for more than nine years, Bit-Wizards entered into the Microsoft managed partner program and are considered a "go to" partner for cloud and mobility solutions.

After expanding into Tennessee in 2011, Bit-Wizards began to look at further expansion. The availability of class A office space and tech-savvy recruits made Austin, Texas an attractive option for their expansion. Yet Okaloosa County wasn't willing to yield (and risk losing the company) to the high profile tech hub of Austin. Through the EDC of Okaloosa County, local and state government and local business partners, the community was able to provide Bit-Wizards an attractive incentive package that allowed them to offset the costs of having office space renovated in Fort Walton Beach. Bit-Wizards was able to keep the core team together in the business friendly environment of Florida in their newly-renovated 15,000 SF corporate headquarters, housing the capacity for sixty employees.

Bit-Wizards' consistent focus on culture and company values proves its worth as the company continues to be recognized as a Florida Trend's best small company to work in Florida since 2010. In 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, & 2014 Bit-Wizards made Inc. Magazine's List of the Top 5000 Fastest Growing Privately Held Companies. Bit-Wizards continues to grow its footprint by adding sales offices nationwide. The company has recently added a Cloud-Managed Service Provider department showing that the community's outpouring of support has allowed Vincent and Louis' original entrepreneurial vision to fully materialize.