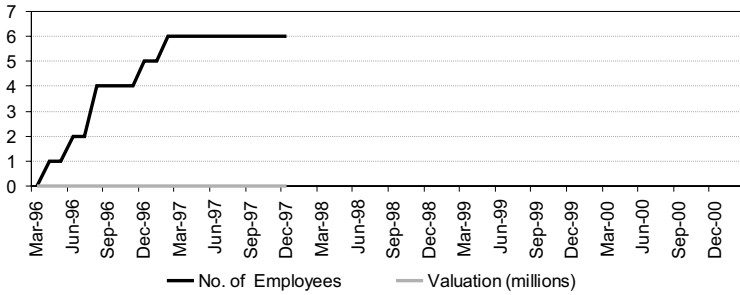


December 1997



East Meets West



As we were becoming increasingly immersed in the aura of the Valley's start-up culture, it became more difficult to imagine a company being any other way. The precarious edge seemed a natural place to perch. Occasionally, I was forced to face the fact that our way was not the only way.

As I watched the sun rise outside the airplane window, I silently rehearsed my upcoming presentation to ECRI, a non-profit company often described as the *Consumer Reports* for healthcare professionals. They produced one of the few comprehensive directories of medical products . . .

Hi . . . I am the president of a rapidly growing, six-person, Silicon Valley, start-up company. We have just released a huge directory of healthcare products and companies on our website—about the same size as your healthcare product directory. A lot of people are using it.

The main difference between our directory and yours is that finding information on our website is much faster than finding it in your book. Oh . . . and . . . our site doesn't cost anything to use.

Now, I would guess that your directory represents a very small percentage of your company's revenue. So, you should let us help you take that old paper directory and bring it to the larger audience on our website. You have the means to maintain it. We have the means to publish it online. In exchange for your content, we'll direct leads to you. Doesn't that make sense?

Well, it made sense to me anyway. I figured that ECRI would easily recognize that the value of their paper directory was dissolving fast and that the Web was a far superior medium for the distribution of