

AARON SPARKS

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SUMMARY

Senior risk executive with a unique blend of business and technology skills developed within auditing, consulting and operations roles. Proven track record helping management teams reduce risk, cut costs, innovate on new risk-based products and services, and negotiate win-win deals. Demonstrated ability within high-performance cultures and high-pressure situations. Three key abilities – 1) managing risk, 2) getting things done, and 3) learning new areas of expertise very quickly.

- Risk Management – Controls, Insurance, & Securitizations
- Fraud Prevention and Detection
- Investigations
- Business Process and IT Audit
- Payments and Treasury Operations
- Compliance Programs
- Data Analytics
- Software Development, Kanban, & Lean

EXPERIENCE

SUNLIGHT PAYMENTS/PURPOSEFUL, Bellevue, WA

June 2015 to September 2019

Early-stage startup focused on developing payment tracking technologies to prevent and detect fraud between charitable foundations and their partner ecosystem of international non-profits

Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder

Selected by Nathan Myhrvold, former CTO of Microsoft and current CEO of Intellectual Ventures, to lead his incubator fund's first social-impact spinout. Took a payments tracking and fraud detection platform from concept to production.

- Raised \$10MM from Bill Gates in 2 rounds of financing and collaborated with him on the service over the course of more than a dozen meetings
- Developed a cutting-edge payments ledger and fraud detection service with properties similar to a blockchain ledger, but utilizing directional transparency and attributed transactions
- Negotiated a payments and FX partnership deal with Bank of America leveraging support from the bank's COO
- Obtained money transmitter licenses and developed the KYC, AML, and compliance program elements required
- Successfully piloted the service in East Africa with Pathfinder, an international women's health non-profit
- Pivoted the product to a charitable giving marketplace platform and re-branded the business (i.e. Purposeful) in order to incentivize non-profit market adoption of the original fraud detection service
- Ran a lean product design playbook in 6 months, including problem space exploration, the development of a high-fidelity prototype, and user testing that yielded a net promoter score of 64 (vs a target of 40)
- Signed 50+ leading Seattle non-profits as launch partners for the new service, including Emergency Food Network, Boys & Girls Club, and the American Cancer Society

INTELLECTUAL VENTURES, Bellevue, WA

December 2008 to June 2015

Investment fund started by Nathan Myhrvold, former CTO of Microsoft, with ~\$6B in committed capital focused on incubating startups and acquiring/licensing intellectual property rights

Senior Director - Finance (2012 - 2015)

Promoted to build and lead several Finance functions, including treasury, insurance, procurement, travel, litigation financing, patent analytics and reporting, and special projects. Focused my team's efforts to reduce risk, mature our processes, and cut costs.

- Led a treasury and legal team that successfully closed multiple, award-winning (e.g. 2015 Adam Smith award for Best Financing Solution) securitization deals totaling more than \$500MM, reduced the credit risk for the fund, and pushed forward the timing of investor distributions
- Mitigated risk for the management team through the creation of a \$100MM+ D&O insurance tower and recruiting/building the audit committee
- Led multiple cost-cutting initiatives, including the renegotiation of two key vendor deals that saved the company millions of dollars

Director of Internal Audit (2008 - 2012)

Recruited to create an internal audit and risk management function at Intellectual Ventures and help reduce risk in the fund's operating environments, including five offices in Asia and an Irish licensing operation.

- Conducted dozens of internal audits and investigations leading to cost recovery and enhanced controls
- Recruited and led a team of highly talented, ex-Big Four auditors

KPMG, Seattle, WA and New York City, NY

February 2004 to December 2008

Forensic practice, focused on investigations, fraud risk management, and corporate intelligence within a Big 4 accounting firm

Director – Global Forensic R&D (2007 - 2008)

Promoted to lead KPMG Forensic practice's global R&D function, including key initiatives for technology development, off-shoring and methodologies.

- Led the creation and global deployment of K-Trace, a next-generation fraud detection platform that used rules and a scoring model to highlight signs of financial statement fraud and unusual accounting entries
- Coordinated the efforts of a dozen country practices to develop a consistent international approach and methodology for investigations, corporate intelligence, and fraud risk management

Director – Forensic Investigations and Fraud Risk Management (2004 - 2006)

Recruited away from Deloitte to lead two key initiatives – 1) build out the Seattle office's investigations and fraud risk management practice and 2) develop the West Coast's data analytics capabilities.

- Directed several investigations into embezzlements, kickbacks, and financial statement-related matters
- Recruited and trained a team of specialists that deployed data analytics and other technology approaches to investigations

DELOITTE, Pittsburgh, PA and Seattle, WA

December 1997 to February 2004

Enterprise Risk Services practice, focused on business process and IT controls, security, and other assurance services within a Big 4 accounting firm

Manager – Enterprise Risk Services

Hired as a Risk Consultant/Associate right out of college, but quickly developed expertise in SAP and data analytics. Promoted from Consultant through to Manager in 4.5 years (compared to 6 year cycle) and became a national resource.

- Played a key role in building Deloitte's national SAP security and controls team, leading key engagements for some of the firm's largest audit clients including Microsoft, John Deere, and The World Bank.
- Project-managed a year-long inventory control system implementation for Microsoft's Licensing division.
- Led Deloitte's efforts in Seattle to create a 10-person data analysis team to support financial statement audits.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY – Bachelor of Science – Accounting, State College PA

1997

ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINERS (ACFE) – CFE designation (currently inactive)

2008

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

PATENT APPLICATIONS - USPTO

Named inventor on several patent applications related to fraud detection and prevention in the non-profit sector, including US20170046670A1 - "Machine/Article/Composition/Process State(s) for Tracking Philanthropic And/or Other Efforts". Co-inventors include Bill Gates (former founder of Microsoft), Nathan Myhrvold (former CTO of Microsoft), Max Levchin (former founder of Paypal), and Lowell Wood (surpassed Thomas Edison for most patents in the US).

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Fall Semester 2005

Private university based in Seattle, WA.

Adjunct Professor

Designed and taught the Accounting Department's first master's-level course on information technology controls.