

Fastest 100

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5. INTRAPAC PROJECTS

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LOCATION: Victoria.

STARTED: 1985. David Payes, Philip Weinman and Alan Kras had already built the computer company HiSoft, which had annual sales of \$225 million and 440 employees when it was sold in 1989. In 1985, they sold a minority shareholding in HiSoft to HBA and launched Intrapac, a property-development business, with \$1 million of the proceeds.

IDEA: Intrapac's plan was to buy land along fast-growing corridors in Victoria, hold it, then subdivide and sell it. Managing director Payes says 70% of new homes in Victoria are built in these corridors.

STRATEGY: The plan was simple: offer a product that was better than its competitors'. Payes says Intrapac focused on new home owners and people upgrading. "Most people in Melbourne only move three to five kilometres from their former home. So we created subdivisions that fitted those needs by providing the second-home owner with a better level of presentation, streetscape and design."

EDGE: Payes researches market demand, demographics and the company's ideas to see if they have merit. "We even research whether people want bluestone paving or whether they prefer exotic or native plants."

RESULTS: Turnover in 1998-99 was \$16 million, and it is expected to increase 20-25% this financial year. The company has seven staff and uses many consultants.

SMARTEST MOVE: Hiring property expertise from a large company. The expert has helped Payes to develop a project management and consulting business. Payes says: "We have now got sophisticated and tight controls that we can make available to others."

FUTURE: Payes expects a slump in residential subdivision in Victoria due to two factors: the goods and services tax and a downturn in population growth. "It's that time of the cycle," he says. Intrapac is looking for other opportunities and is involved in a \$10-million retail and residential development in the Melbourne suburb of Prahran.

Amanda Gome

