

Fusionbox: Denver Interactive Agency

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Fusionbox Emerges From Dust of Dot-Bomb Rubble

by [Doug McPherson](#)

The start of Alexander Groth's story sounds like a lot of stories from the dot-bomb era. But the part after the crash is what landed his company on these pages.

He was working with a local Internet company about six years ago when the economy collapsed and he found himself out of a job. "But I knew the Internet wasn't going away, and that clients would still need [web design](#) without all the fluff and bloated budgets of the Internet boom," Groth said. That single thought served as the start of [Fusionbox](#) Inc., a company in Denver that designs and develops web sites.

In his old job, Groth said he had seen plenty of web site consultants oversell, overcharge and under deliver. "I knew when clients rebounded, they'd want quality products, high-level service and a company that could meet timelines," he said.

So he chose those principles on which to build his company. Evidently, not a bad plan. Fusionbox has enjoyed stratospheric growth. Groth attributes the growth to finding and retaining "excellent people" and building partnerships with ad agencies where Fusionbox becomes a "de facto web department."

"These partnerships have really kept the projects coming in and helped us to build our reputation as a reliable team and our client list," he said. It's a nice client list, too: [QuickBooks](#), [Body-for-Life](#), [ManiaTV!](#) and Denver ad agency [McClain Finlon](#), to name a few. McClain Finlon wanted a web site that was more user-friendly, could be found more easily via searches, could play videos fast and that employees could change quickly and simply.

"Fusionbox gave the back-end of our web site more power so that we at the agency could have more control of the site's content, to be able to do things more fluidly with it," said Cathey Finlon, McClain Finlon's CEO and owner. "Especially in advertising, it's really important to be able change in the online world," she said. "They've put us in a great position with unlimited potential with our site."

While Fusionbox's revenues and client numbers have grown, its employee numbers have stayed low. In fact, it only has seven employees, just four more than when it started in 2000.

"We're not much bigger today quite intentionally. By keeping ourselves small and lean, we can ensure we keep our level of quality up while keeping our overhead down," Groth said. "We don't have a fancy office downtown or a big ad budget. Ninety-five percent of our work comes from repeat customers and word-of-mouth."

Groth said Fusionbox uses web design to deliver an "aesthetic effect" that also drives sales, improves search-engine rankings ([SEO](#)) and speaks to target markets. "A web site can look fantastic, but it also has to help pay the bills," he said.

Groth said the company has found a niche where it "really excels" -- a niche he described as "elegant,

usable, search-engine-friendly web design and [custom software development](#)."

"We've focused on that niche even when it means passing on projects," Groth said. "We don't do everything; we don't offer print materials, interactive CDs or e-mail marketing, but we are very, very good at what we specialize in."

The challenge now, Groth said, is to grow "elegantly while maintaining quality" of products and client service. "To do that, we've chosen projects very carefully to ensure that we're the right match for the client," he said. "By being focused, we're able to stay current with new technologies and best practices in our niche, and pass the benefits of that knowledge on to our clients."

Working closely with those clients is another key strategy. "We listen so we understand their goals and objectives and then we keep communication strong so they understand what we are doing and why. We keep their goals top of mind throughout the entire process."

That process is where Fusionbox got its name. "The name reflects our philosophy; by bringing together the talent in our company with the talent in the customer's, we consistently achieve results that delight customers," Groth said.

He said Fusionbox will continue to develop long-term relationships with key clients and ad agencies. "We'd like to keep a steady and consistent growth in the Denver market," he said. "We've watched many web design and development firms grow too big and too fast and then go out of business; we'd like to avoid that. The Denver market is thriving right now, and companies are really starting to catch on to using new web technologies, so we only expect to continue to thrive and grow."

Fusionbox has also taken time to give back to the community with a program it developed with [Arts Street](#), a Colorado-based nonprofit organization that teaches at-risk kids about art and the business behind it. Groth said Fusionbox employees mentor the kids on web design, project management and client relations.

"We've actually seen some of the kids go on to launch successful careers in the industry," Groth said.