

# D. Mark Poag

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## PROFILE

Accomplished business executive with rich experience in both strategy and execution. Successfully founded a start-up company (DigiContract) that he sold to Datacert which he helped grow from \$1.1MM to more than \$60MM in annual revenues and for which he helped orchestrate the sale to its largest competitor. Subsequently co-founded a venture capital fund (Fitz Gate Ventures) which invests primarily in companies from the Princeton University ecosystem.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**FITZ GATE VENTURES, L.P., Houston, Texas.**

**Mar 2015 - Present**

**Co-Founder and Managing Director**

Fitz Gate Ventures is an early stage, network-driven venture capital firm with a specific, but not exclusive, focus on the Princeton University ecosystem. Fitz Gate currently manages two funds with approximately \$25 million under management.

**RICE UNIVERSITY, Houston, TX**

**Jan 2019 – Present**

**Lecturer**

Teach “BUSI 465/MGMT 740: STUDENT VENTURE FUND: EVALUATING STARTUP INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES” to Rice University undergrad and MBA students.

**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, Princeton, NJ**

**Sept 2018 - Present**

**Lecturer**

Present lecture series about startup companies and venture capital to Princeton University graduate students.

**BENCHWATCH, INC., Houston, Texas.**

**Mar 2015 – Aug. 2017**

**Member, Board of Directors**

BenchWatch is an industry-specific, online marketplace for finding, hiring and paying consultants. Our platform enables superior business outcomes at a lower cost by empowering companies to locate skills from their trusted networks, enabling great consultants to find great opportunities, and automating the entire staffing process.

**DATACERT, INC., Houston, Texas.**

**Aug 2001-Dec 2014**

**SVP, Legal, Marketing and Strategic Alliances and Board Secretary**

At Datacert, led multiple critical Company departments, including **Legal** (13 years), **Product Marketing** (6 years), **Marketing Communications** (6 years), **Strategic Alliances** (4 years), **Product Management** (3 years) and **Human Resources** (3 years). Also oversaw acquisitions and ultimately the sale of our Company to our largest competitor. Primary accomplishments included:

### Company Strategy

- With the CEO and CFO, set the strategic direction of Datacert, resulting in 36% Consolidated Annual Growth Rate (\$1.1MM to more than \$60MM in annual revenues from 2001-2014);
- With the CEO and CFO, led five rounds of external equity and debt financing, and directed the acquisition of Corprasoft in 2007;
- Conducted successful auction sales process of Datacert to Wolters Kluwer N.V. in April, 2014.

### Product and Marketing Strategy

- Shaped the strategic direction of company’s product line and all marketing strategies;

- Managed the company’s outbound marketing, including content creation, messaging delivery, collateral, branding, website and event participation;
- Our marketing initiatives generated more than 50 percent of the total new software sales pipeline opportunities.

**Strategic Alliances**

- Responsible for all business development and partnership operations including strategic planning, budgets and personnel;
- Developed and executed short and long term corporate business development and strategic alliances business plan;
- Our Alliance Partner Program drove 25 percent of Datacert’s annual new software sales orders.

**Legal and Regulatory**

- Oversee all transactional, litigation, corporate fundraising and regulatory activities for the company;
- Lead negotiation of all company software and service agreements;
- As Corporate Secretary, lead investor relations and maintain corporate records;
- Recognized as “Outstanding Solo Corporate Counsel” by the Association of Corporate Counsel and the Houston Business Journal.

**DIGICONTRACT, INC., Houston, Texas.**

**2000 - 2001**

**Founder, President and CEO.**

Application service provider of document collaboration technologies and services for the corporate legal market.

- Directed the formation and funding of DigiContract, including the development and testing of software, raising seed and professional investor rounds of financing and managing software, sales, business development and executive staff;
- Grew to 14 full-time employees in a 2-year period;
- Conducted the successful sale of company to Datacert, Inc. in August 2001.

**BRACEWELL & PATTERSON, L.L.P., Houston, Texas.**

**1997 - 2000**

**Associate.**

Represented lenders, borrowers, buyers and sellers in a wide variety of commercial transactions, including the purchase and monetization of electric power supply contracts, the roll-up of oil field service companies, the purchase and sale of real and personal property and the stock of corporations, the syndication of term and revolving loans, the delivery of electric energy, and the sale of Section 29 tax credits.

**EDUCATION**

**TULANE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW**

New Orleans, LA

**Doctor of Jurisprudence, May 1997 (Cum Laude)**

David L Herman Legal Ethics Award and CALI Excellence award for Securities Regulation.

**TULANE UNIVERSITY, A.B. FREEMAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

New Orleans, LA

**Master of Business Administration, May 1997**

Freeman School Dean’s List and Morton A. Aldrich Scholarship recipient.

**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**

Princeton, NJ

**Bachelor of Arts, June 1993**

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Quoted in PC Today (2011), Houston Business Journal (2011), InsideCounsel Magazine (2010, 2011), ILTA Ask the Expert (2011), The Metropolitan Corporate Counsel (2010, 2011), Law360 (2012), Canadian Lawyer (2014)
- “Utilizing A Technology Platform For Better Litigation Cost Management.” The Metropolitan Corporate Counsel (April 2011).
- “Responding to Business Pressures on Legal Departments: The Value of the Uniform Task-Based Management System Code Set.” International In-house Counsel Journal (2010)
- “Utilizing a Legal Technology Platform for Strategic Legal Department Management.” International In-house Counsel Journal (2012)
- “Strategic Legal Process Management – Technology Platforms Offer Unprecedented Benefits.” The Metropolitan Corporate Counsel (November 2010).

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- **Member**, State Bar of Texas, Association of Corporate Counsel
- **President**, Princeton Alumni Association of Houston (2002 – 2008) (2017 – 2021)
- **President**, Princeton Class of 1993 (1993-1998).
- **Sr. Fellow**, American Leadership Forum (2015-present)