



Earthquake helpers

Dran and Dean Reese
Quakehold

Founded in 1991
Escondido, Calif.
Sales: \$5 million to \$7 million
www.quakehold.com

Sticking Power

Two years after the Loma Prieta 6.9 earthquake shook San Francisco, Dran Reese, a schoolteacher, came up with a putty-like product to help secure fragile items and keep them from falling and breaking or injuring someone. Originally meant for use in the Reese home, their product was transformed into a serious business, and Quakehold is now sold nationally at such outlets as Home Depot and Lowe's.

One thing they would do differently:

"Hire key personnel sooner to help grow the business. Part of the problem with a small business is that you grow accustomed to a certain cash flow, and you don't necessarily want to step out and hire key people and pay them top dollar. My wife believed in it, but I was less excited about it. [So] we sought the counsel of retired CEOs and CFOs at the Chairman's Roundtable. We were stuck and not increasing our customer base or volume, and their recommendation [among other things] was to hire additional key personnel in sales and marketing."