Pete Adams is the husband of my cousin Debbie Adams on the west coast, and he shared his entrepreneur experiences with me. Peter lives in San Jose, CA in the heart of Silicon Valley. He started Noah Precision 12 years ago. He is the co-founder of a glaucoma surgery company in the Boston area called SOLX, which also started 12 years ago. Below I quote Peter's answer to my entrepreneur questions.

“Noah Precision is an employee owned Company. We have no formal mission statement and do not believe a mission statement serves the interests of our customers, shareholders or employees. Rather we focus every day on providing customers with a superior product with excellent support at reasonable prices. We believe this is the best model. SOLX does have a mission statement, which is to preserve vision for an aging population.

Noah Precision is a manufacturer of temperature control equipment to the semiconductor industry. Our customers include HP, AMD, Samsung, Texas Instruments, Lam Research, Applied Materials and similar such customers. Our smallest customer has annual revenues of > $10,000,000,000. SOLX is a pre-revenue company seeking FDA approval for a surgical device for treatment of glaucoma.

Our ecosystem for Noah Precision includes a board of directors with more than 100 combined years of experiences in the semiconductor equipment industry. We also have a large fund that is an investor. 80% of our revenue is outside the USA. To reach this international market, we have distributors in more than 10 key countries. Each distributor has a relationship with our key customers that date more than 10 years. Most of the distributors that represent our products were once buyers of our products. Similarly, our board of directors for SOLX included doctors with more than 50 years of experience in the glaucoma treatment industry.

The government played no role in our start-up or has provided no specific resources to accelerate our growth. However, the State government in many states has encouraged energy savings and has made a large pool of funds available to our customers who purchase energy efficient equipment. Since our temperature control equipment uses 80% LESS energy that what we replace, there has been a large subsidy available to our customers when they purchase our equipment. Internationally, governments have also created large pools of funds to reduce energy consumption. These funds have provided for significant growth for us. Boston University hosted a competition for emerging businesses and SOLX was awarded a seat in their incubator. Boston University provided SOLX with facilities and trained staff to accelerate our growth.

Boston University served as an “anchor institution” for SOLX.

Challenges: The biggest challenge for Noah Precision is to fund the product development process that ensures our technology is at the leading edge for the benefit of our customers. This spending consumes over 18% of total revenue and it continues to grow annually. The only way to stay relevant to customers in the semiconductor industry is to have the best technology and this requires investment. Choosing the right technology to invest in is always challenging.

Our measure of performance is return on capital employed. This is the only metric we care about. As small business owners, we want a significant return on our invested capital and ROCE is the best measure of performance for us. At some point, I will retire and finding a successor organization will become the next measure of success for us.”