Mekos Corporation grew up by seizing opportunities and adapting as the situation required. Founded by David Page in 1977 as an outgrowth of his consulting experience, Vancouver-based Mekos designs, develops and supports custom software for a wide range of clients in for-profit and nonprofit fields. In 1988, Mekos launched its AutoFueling Systems (AFS) division, which creates and markets industry-leading software for operators of automated cardlock fueling facilities—that is, companies engaged in commercial fueling.

Over the years, Mekos staff has ranged from five to nine employees while working with various industries, from lenders to lumber traders, thanks to its strength and agility in learning new program languages, operating environments and hardware. But those same virtues also limited the time available to focus more deeply on a particular field. Cash flow was uneven, too. Then, when AutoFueling’s largest and longtime client was acquired by a public company, creating significant market disruption and turmoil for most AFS customers, Page and COO Michael Jaeger saw the handwriting on the wall.

**Looking for Help in Just the Right Place**

Page and Jaeger contemplated two strategies: 1) enter the mobile app market (which they did), and 2) reinvent their license-based software model into a subscription-based model in the Cloud. Looking for some outside perspective, they turned to WSU Vancouver’s Business Growth MAP program, a student-led consultancy that works with local businesses to recommend growth and marketing strategies.

The Business Growth MAP team of undergraduate students, supported by an instructor and a volunteer mentor, met with Jaeger and Page, analyzed relevant company records in detail, collected survey data from customers, explored industry practices, and ultimately delivered recommendations and an action plan.

**Focusing on the Core**

The team’s first recommendation was that Mekos divest itself of the recently introduced mobile apps. They were pessimistic about the profitability of the apps, and suggested putting them aside in order to focus on the core business and development of a new, subscription-based service model that would provide more consistent income. Mekos agreed, divesting its mobile app business to a separate entity.

The second recommendation was to move to a subscription service model. “They supported our expectation that migrating to a service model in the Cloud was a good investment,” Jaeger said. In December 2014, Mekos started using Amazon Web Services to launch its subscription offering. This positions Mekos to begin migrating existing customers—and adding new ones—to the hosted model, shifting from a spiky revenue model to one that’s much more predictable, thus strengthening its cash flow and positioning itself for further growth.

“The MAP team is two for two,” Jaeger said. “We’ve executed on both recommendations.”