

The Oregon Investment Fund (OIF) was initiated by the Oregon legislature to create value by building and investing in successful, innovative enterprises for the benefit of the Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund (OPERF). As part of its investment strategy, OIF makes direct investments in companies that show promising return alongside an existing portfolio fund. One of its latest direct investments is in Criterion Brock, an Oregon-based company that supplies and installs floor coverings to multi-family housing units.

Criterion Brock was started in 1982 with just a few employees and a little more than \$7,000 in gross sales. After James A. Meyer and Cary Jackson partnered in 1988, the two businessmen envisioned growing the company into a national operator. Today, Criterion Brock is the leading floor coverings operator for apartments and condos West of the Mississippi. Its offices now span from the West Coast to Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Nevada, and it has grown to more than 700 employees and contractors. In 2007, after receiving funding from the OIF and Wedbush Capital Partners, the company merged with Brock Interiors, doubling its size with revenues expected to hit \$80 million in 2008.

### ***Challenging Employees to Grow and Lead***

The value that Criterion Brock puts on its employees is central to its growth strategy. The company fosters career growth that allows employees to take on different positions throughout the organization. “We don’t promise employees that they will be doing their job a year from now. We keep continually challenging them and asking them to take more responsibility,” said Cary Jackson, CEO of Criterion Brock.

Criterion Brock involves its employees in group-decision-making opportunities that fosters the generation of ideas from the bottom up. These initiatives, according to its management team, have led to above industry-average employee retention.

### ***Customer Service Fuels Growth***

Serving primarily apartment managers has led the company to a service first mission. “We want to be known as the vendor that gets called once and the job is done,” Jackson said. “Our high-level of customer service is our competitive advantage.”

Meyer and Jackson grew the company through strategically acquiring competitors, starting in 1991 with a company in California that provides service to the Sacramento area. Soon afterwards, they purchased Knight Floor Covering in Newark, California. In 1997, Brown Brothers Flooring was acquired, which doubled the size of its Seattle operations. Additional acquisitions included, Floor Design in Sacramento in 1998; Solar Contract Carpet in Southern California in 2001; and Flooring Solutions in Seattle in 2003. Criterion Brock plans to continue its growth plans through acquisitions in key geographic areas, such as the Sun Belt states and the Rocky Mountain area.

The company is committed to providing green and sustainable products to its customers by identifying and purchasing carpet and carpet padding from established green suppliers. The company also recycles used carpets to a vendor who transforms the nylon and makes new products.

For more information on Criterion Brock, please visit [www.criterionbrock.com](http://www.criterionbrock.com)  
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