

## THE LIST

## THREE QUESTIONS

# Finding the right niche continues to pay off



Pure Adapt is one of four new companies on this year's Fastest-Growing List.

The company, which ranked No.

18, was founded by four people who went to elementary school together. They weren't close friends and went to different colleges, but by 2006, they'd come back together as business partners to found Pure Adapt. Like many startups, it began in the basement of one of the partner's homes.

They started a website, [detailedimage.com](http://detailedimage.com), dedicated to high-end automotive detailing supplies. All four had other jobs, including two that did detailing on the weekends.

By 2008, they'd moved into a warehouse in Guilderland, and a year later, they dropped their other jobs to focus on the company, which has expanded to other niche websites and e-commerce sales. One of the partners has since left the company, but the other three – Mike Li, Greg Pautler and Adam McFarland – are still going strong, and may have to move the expanding company to a larger location.



COURTESY OF PURE ADAPT

Left to right: Greg Pautler, Adam McFarland, Michael Li.

McFarland talked about what's next for the company, and why he worries about what Tesla CEO Elon Musk is doing with cars.

**What are your company goals over the next five years?** If you look at our revenue growth, it's been steady – up 20 percent, then another 20 percent, and the numbers have just been getting bigger. We're on pace to have another 20 percent growth year. That's what

we want. You read about companies that grow super-fast, and sometimes they fall super-fast, too. One of our big issues right now is we're maxing out our space. We're looking into buying our own space, maybe a larger space and leasing out to other people. Detailing is a niche, not a \$20 million a year business, but we have a few more years of this pace of growth. But we've got an eye on a long-term business. We're not thinking of the next three

to five years, but having the company until we're not working anymore.

**What's changing the focus or disrupting your industry the most right now?** I think in retail in general, Amazon is kind of scary. They're the giant in the room. They ignored our industry until three or four years ago. Then they started showing up at car shows, suddenly selling what we sell. It puts you on higher alert.

**Biggest worry for the company going forward?** I think long-term, it's the future of cars and transportation. Tesla has a self-driving car. Uber's doing the same, Google's looking ... it doesn't keep me up at night, but we're keenly aware it's coming in the next few decades. In the shorter term, it would be a new competitor coming out of left field and finding something we missed. I'm more worried about two kids who love cars from some computer science department that launch something, make a breakthrough and we don't realize until it's too late. That's a bigger worry than one of the big guys we already know about.

-Todd Kehoe