COMPUTER SYSTEM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT AT MASPAR

During the month of December 1991 Jeff Kalb, MasPar's CEO, was thinking about what step to take next. MasPar had just completed the successful introduction of its first product: a massively parallel computer. In developing a completely new computer system in less than 22 months, MasPar had set itself an unusually high standard for product development time. But computer customers require a continuous stream of new products. At this stage, several peripherals needed to be developed, a successor to the MP-1 was needed, and more application software was necessary for MasPar's massively parallel architecture. Barely three years old, MasPar was limited in personnel and financial resources, and it was not clear how to proceed with these new projects. Now that MasPar was evolving from a startup to a multi-product company with a customer base to retain and expand, managing the company had become more complex. With some nostalgia, Kalb thought of his early days at MasPar...

CORPORATE HISTORY

Jeff Kalb gained 26 years of industrial experience, rising from integrated circuit design through manufacturing and operations to engineering management of systems companies. Before founding MasPar, Kalb had been Vice President of Low End Systems and Technologies at Digital Equipment Corporation (Digital), where one of his teams had been working on the design of a 32-processor chip for a parallel computer. When Digital decided not to pursue this technology, Mr. Kalb left the company and started exploring the possibility of developing a massively parallel computer based on the work done at Digital. In October of 1987, MasPar (*Mas*sively *Par*allel) Computer Corporation was founded, and the second employee, James Peachey, who had left his position as President and CEO of American Information Technology, joined MasPar as Vice President of Operations. Peachey had over 26 years of experience in a variety of senior management positions in the computer industry.

MasPar's initial strategy was to acquire the technology which Kalb's team had developed at Digital. When negotiations with Digital ended unsuccessfully in November, Kalb approached Stanford University Professor Tom Blank. Blank had written his dissertation on computer architectures for parallel machines, and had been working at Stanford since 1982 on CAD (Computer Aided Design) applications for such systems. In parallel with the academic work, he had been actively consulting for companies such as IBM and Hewlett-Packard in a variety of areas.

Together, Kalb, Peachey, and Blank began writing a business plan to build and market a massively parallel computer. On January 6, 1988, the business plan was completed, and Tom