

An aerial photograph of a Silicon Valley city, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings, roads, and green spaces. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Morgan Lewis

SILICON VALLEY
STARTUP AND
GROW SERIES

Get Up and Go – Navigating Startup Issues

April 15, 2021

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Presenters



Karen A. Abesamis



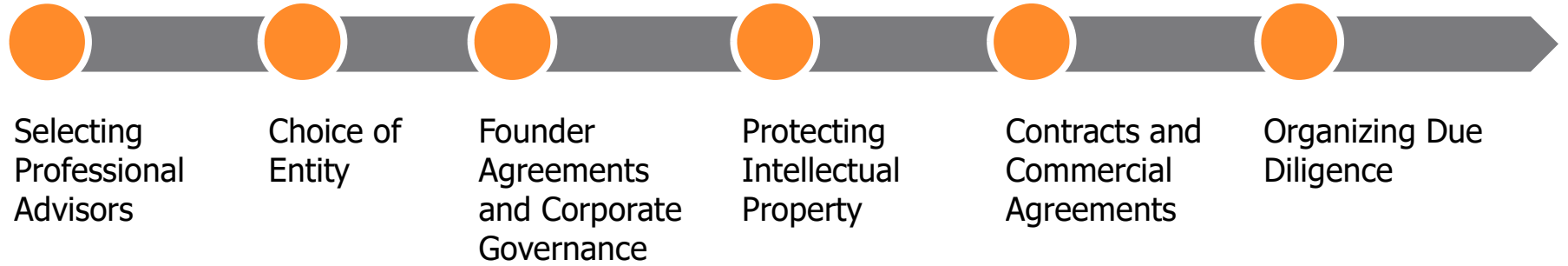
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Key Considerations in the Formation Process



Selecting Professional Advisors



LEGAL COUNSEL



**ACCOUNTING AND
FINANCIAL**



**OTHER ADVISORS AND
ADVISORY BOARDS**

Selecting the Appropriate Entity is Critical

Consideration	C-Corporations	Limited Liability Company
General	More regulated; well-developed case law and statutes	Flexible; case law less developed
Tax	Generally subject to two levels of tax on income (entity level & stockholder level)	At member-level only
Liability	Stockholder generally insulated from liability	Members and managers generally insulated from liability unless set forth in the Operating Agreement.
Management	Governed by a board of directors	Flexible
Fiduciary Duties	Directors and officers owe fiduciary duties	Default is that managers owe duty of care and loyalty



Founder Agreements and Corporate Governance

1

Determine Equity Ownership

- Voting/Nonvoting Stock

2

Determine Vesting and Equity Terms

- Restricted Stock and 83b Elections
- Voluntary Termination and Termination without Cause
- Repurchase Rights
- Termination with Cause

3

Board of Directors and Corporate Governance

Protecting Intellectual Property



Proprietary Information and Inventions Agreements

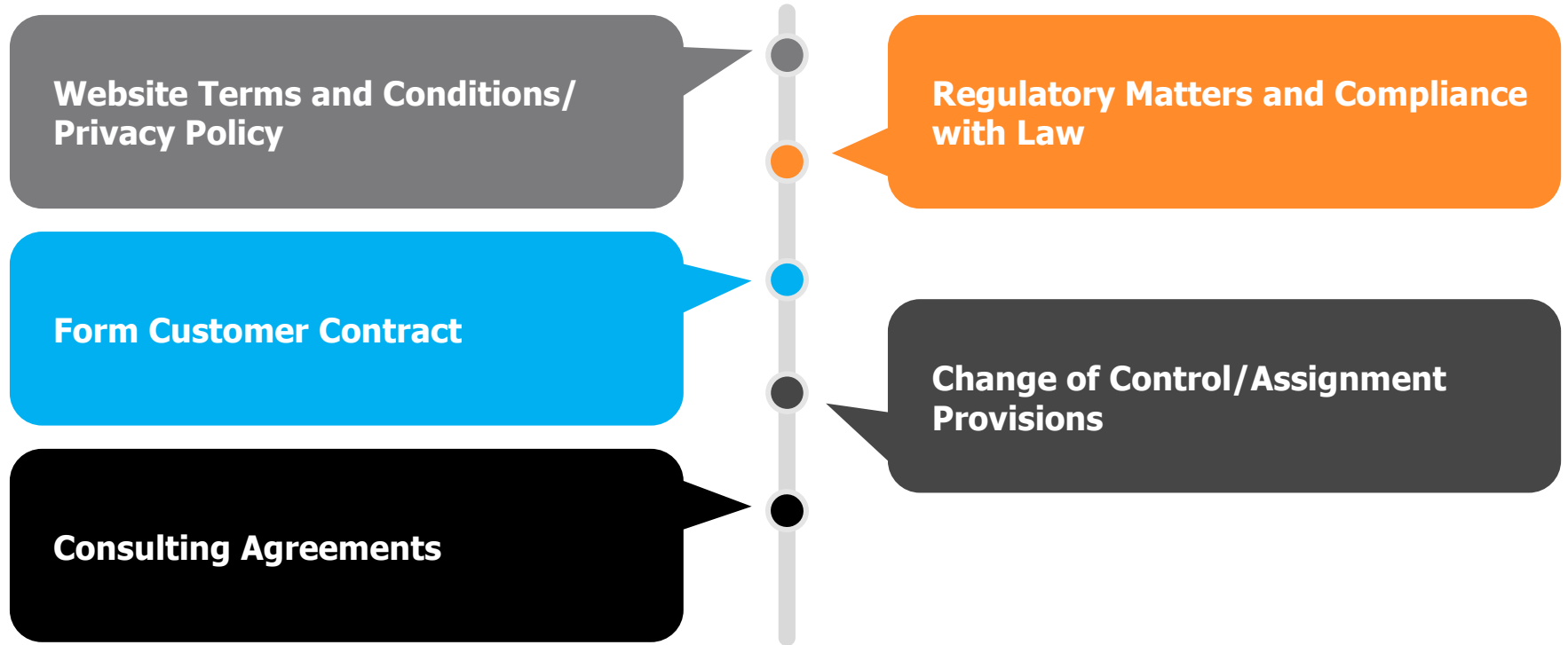
Non-Disclosure Agreements

Consider Importance of Trademarks and Branding

Develop Patent/Intellectual Property Strategy

- Consult with Patent Counsel
- Understand Patent Traps for the Unwary

Contracts and Commercial Agreements



Common Legal Mistakes and How to Avoid Them



Handle Founder Decisions Early. Navigate choice of entity, equity split, governance and immigration considerations. Use vesting provisions and transfer restrictions to protect the equity issued. Execute founder agreements and stockholder agreements.



Follow Corporate Formalities. Understand tax implications and corporate law requirements. Keep good corporate records. Plan and prepare for regular board meeting to involve board members and advisors.



Build Good Hygiene Habits. Obtain, compile and store all signed documents. Keep track of amendments to agreements.



Understand Regulatory Landscape. Pay attention to employment, securities, corporate, tax, & other laws governing regulated industries and your business generally. Regulatory compliance will be important to investors, so know the answers.



Choose Partners Carefully. Be careful about bringing in outside investors too soon and not thinking about the right investors with proper view of company and its business strategy. Be optimistic, but do not over promise to investors.



Avoid Showstoppers. Eliminate or mitigate prior employer IP, confidential information or non-compete entanglements. Appropriately consider any applicable University IP policy and rights.



Develop Your IP Strategy. Obtain proper IP assignments from all who touch IP. Also consider IP protection strategy and options early. Implement IP protection options based on cost-benefit analysis, taking into account stage of venture, cash position, industry and relationship of IP to long-term success.



Be Careful About Promising Equity. Specify amounts, not percentages, when discussing equity. Be clear that all equity discussed will be subject to vesting and actual execution of grant documents. No napkins!



Read and Understand Documents. In the frantic world of growing a start-up, it is easy to gloss over documents. Read and understand the business implications of all documents, even if reviewed by counsel or other advisors.



Pay Attention to Privacy, Data Protection and Cyber Security. Privacy, cyber security and protecting customer data are critical issues and must be thought about in the context of your business.

Early Stage Financing Considerations

Term sheets

Term sheets are an essential part of any corporate financing transaction – whether angel or venture capital financing.

Key information includes:

- Amount to be Raised
- Minimum Amount Accepted
- Qualification of Investor
- Documentation of Investment
- Special rights of Investor
- Confidentiality
- Exclusivity
- Governing Law

Early Stage Financing Considerations

Convertible Note

An interest bearing note that convertible into future equity in the company's next financing or upon the meeting of certain agreed upon terms (but if the terms are not met, it must be repaid in cash at the agreed upon maturity date).

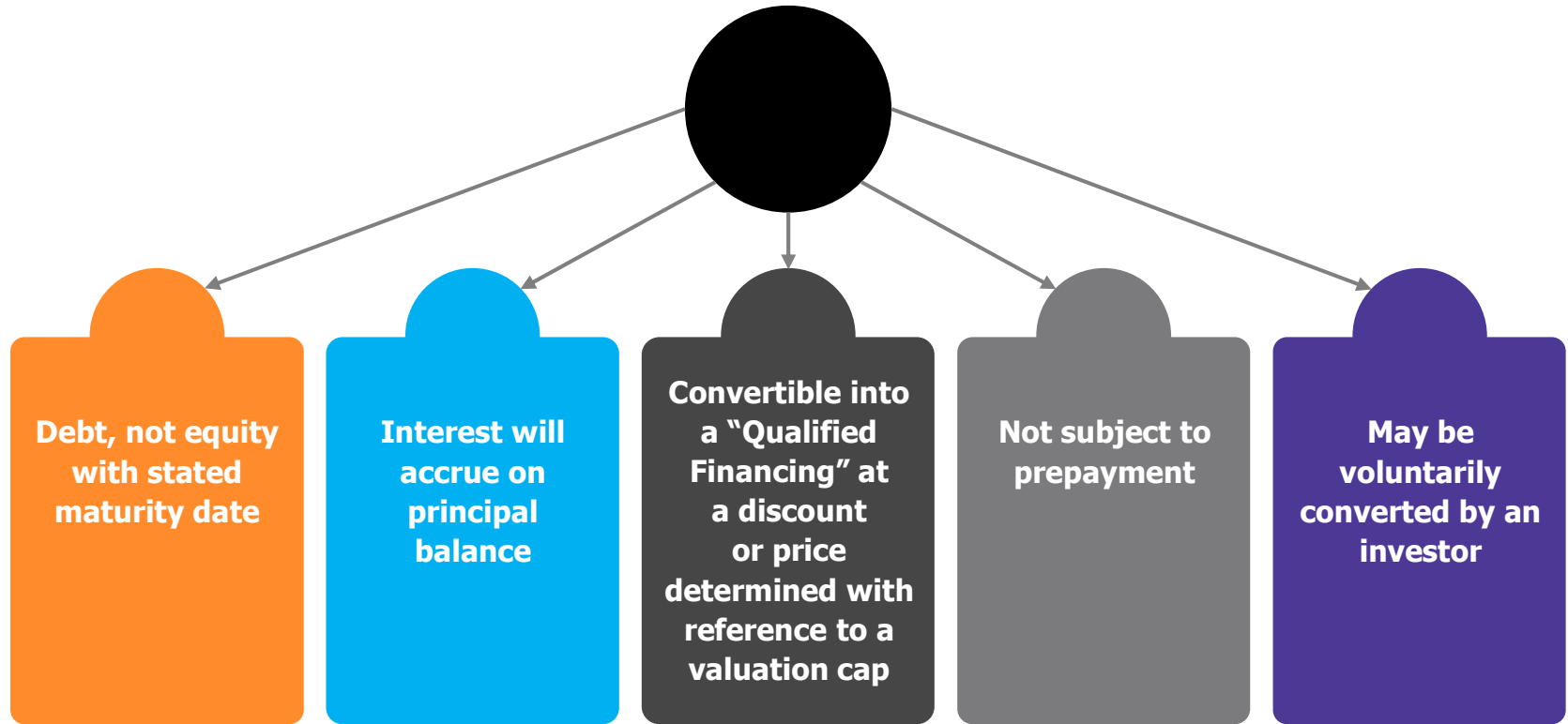
Simple Agreement for Future Equity (SAFE)

An equity alternative to convertible debt instruments, generally considered equity but are not really either debt or equity. A SAFE will result in the issuance of shares at the next equity financing, if no equity financing occurs, typically no trigger for repayment or conversion results.

Preferred Equity

An equity instrument issued at a per share price determined based upon an agreed upon pre-money valuation of the company. Entitled to a liquidation preference, which may be participating or non-participating. Includes other rights negotiated among parties.

Key Characteristics of Convertible Debt



Early Stage Financing Considerations

Advantages of Convertible Debt

- Allows company to defer establishing a valuation.
- Valuation cap is typically higher than what could be achieved in a priced round.
- Typically a faster (and also a less expensive) option to a more traditional equity investment.

Areas of Concern

- Determining appropriate maturity date, valuation cap and discount rate.
- Company has a limited time frame before the note needs to be repaid; if the conversion event has not occurred at maturity, the investors could elect to renegotiate terms (rather than accelerate) but company is at a disadvantage in terms of negotiating leverage.

Key Characteristics of SAFEs

Essentially works like a convertible note, but is never repayable and can be considered and be treated like equity.

A SAFE is not a debt instrument and largely considered to be equity.

A SAFE is treated like other convertible securities, i.e., warrants and options.

Converts to "SAFE preferred stock" when any amount is raised in a preferred equity round. Conversion is automatic and terminates the SAFE.

Early Stage Financing Considerations

Advantages of SAFEs for Company

- Not debt on balance sheet. No termination, maturity date or interest payments.
- No interest payments to investors, but the company can choose to make discretionary dividend payments.
- Also a faster (and also a less expensive) option to a more traditional equity investment

Areas of Concern

- Generally, SAFEs are an advantageous way to raise early stage capital.
- Often, not as attractive to investors, so may be more difficult to raise additional capital with this instrument.





Key Characteristics of Preferred Equity

1

Issued at a price based upon an agreed upon valuation.

2

Entitled to a liquidation preference, participating or non-participating.

3

Generally includes a variety of additional terms which must be negotiated

- Board of Directors
- Protective Provisions
- Size of Equity Pool
- Information, Preemptive and Other Investor Rights
- Redemption Rights
- Drag-Along Rights
- Transfer Restrictions

Questions?

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Biography



Karen A. Abesamis

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Karen A. Abesamis focuses her practice on mergers and acquisitions, strategic and venture capital investments, and technology transactions. She advises on general corporate matters, including securities compliance and corporate governance. Her clients include public and private companies, financial institutions, venture capital funds and corporate investors. Having practiced in the Bay Area for more than a decade, Karen has significant experience working with technology companies and non-technology companies that are finding opportunities to grow through the use of technology.

Biography



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Douglas J. Crisman brings the perspective of a software designer and intellectual property (IP) director for a leading computer hardware company to his patent law practice, which includes patent preparation, licensing, and prelitigation opinions, as well as IP transactions, due diligence, and counseling. He routinely works with standards-setting bodies and consortia on IP issues, and provides advice on strategic IP management and open source legal issues ranging from software development to code review and licensing.

Biography



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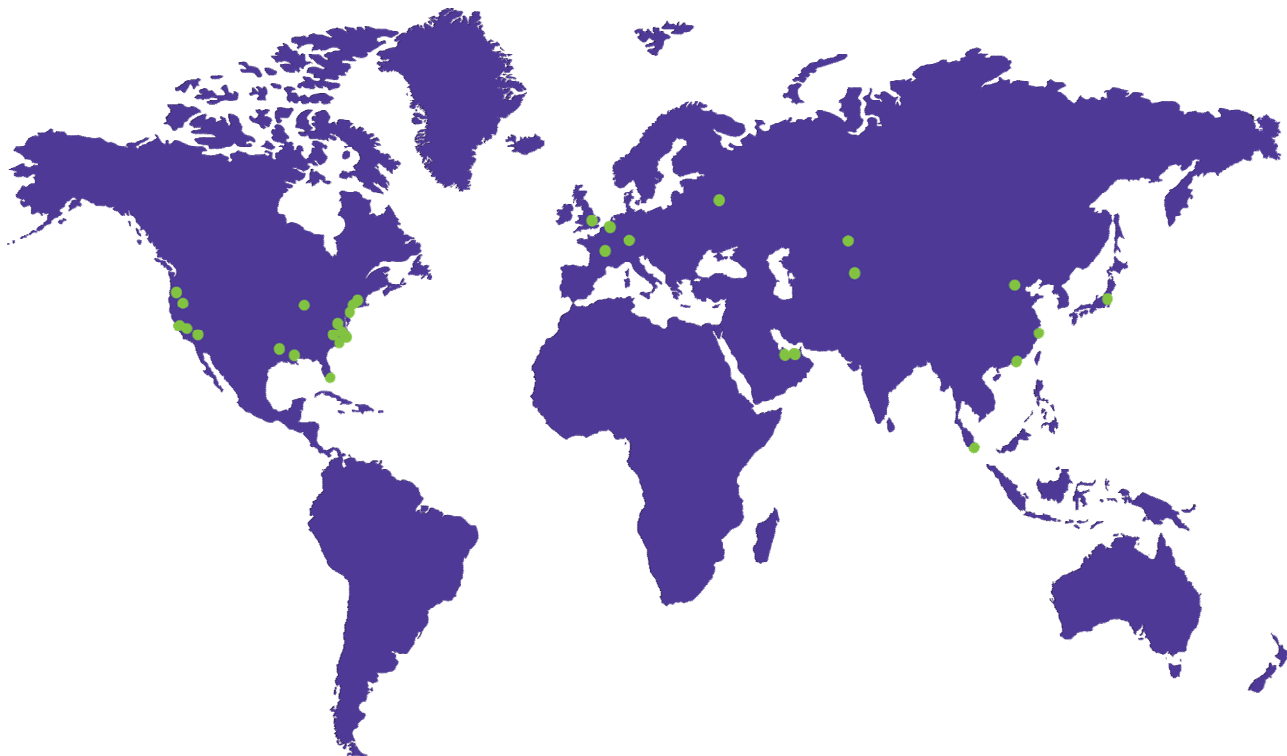
With a focus on venture capital-backed companies in Silicon Valley, Eric Foster provides strategic counselling to clients in technology, life sciences, and other growth industries. Eric's practice covers private and public equity financings, recapitalizations, and mergers and acquisitions for companies at every stage of the business cycle, as well as venture and corporate venture representations. Eric provides clients with comprehensive and efficient front-line support, leveraging the firm's global platform at a moment's notice to successfully address the most challenging of issues. Beyond transactions, Eric has more than 12 years of experience with corporation and other entity formations, executive compensation and equity incentives, employment matters, securities law compliance, corporate governance, and licensing agreements.

Our Global Reach

Africa
Asia Pacific
Europe
Latin America
Middle East
North America

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Beijing
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Brussels
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