

Skillspower.com To Provide Internet-Based K-12 State Test Preparation Services

Hights Cross Communications provides \$5.0 Million in Initial Funding

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Hights Cross Communications, Inc., a rapidly growing educational and professional publisher, today announced that it will launch a new business called Skillspower.com, to provide test prep materials on the Internet, CD-ROM and through in-service training. This new business will license its content from Hights Cross' wholly-owned Educational Design, Inc. Hights Cross named Kevin McAliley Chairman and CEO of Skillspower.com, which will be based in New York City. Hights Cross provided initial funding of \$5.0 million in addition to EDI's existing content and resources.

"Skillspower.com will open for business with a rich product offering based on EDI's massive database of state test prep materials," said Peter J. Quandt, Hights Cross Chairman and CEO. " Kevin McAliley brings to Skillspower.com an exceptional record of establishing and building successful educational businesses. In 1995, Kevin led the team that launched Newbridge Educational Publishing's school business, which has enjoyed explosive growth. Kevin and a team of experienced publishing executives will empower teachers with tools that will improve their students' effectiveness on state exams.

According to Kevin McAliley: "I'm excited about this opportunity to leverage the intellectual property that EDI has created over nearly 40 years. EDI has grown at double-digit rates over each of the last 10 years. With EDI's superior content, strong brand recognition and loyalty among teachers, and Skillspower.com's powerful Internet services delivery engine, we believe this new venture will grow even faster."

The Skillspower.com/EDI relationship will allow for access to over 300 different books covering state and standardized tests taken by over 90 percent of American students in grades K-12. Skillspower.com assessment tools, tutorial materials and practice tests will be available for license at the school, district or state level, or in the home.

Skillspower.com said that additional executive appointments and product offerings would be announced shortly.

McAliley, age 40, joined Hights Cross in 1999 as President and CEO of Hights Cross Publishing. Prior to that, he was President and CEO of Primedia's Channel One Network and President, CEO of Films for the Humanities and Sciences, Inc., and Director of Newbridge Publishing. He began his career at WGBH Educational Foundation, where he was producer of the PBS series "This Old House." McAliley earned a BA from Harvard University and an MBA from Columbia University.