

PRESS RELEASE – Creating a Great Bank: Achieving Superior Performance After the Perfect Storm - FINAL

**For Immediate Release**

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Princeton, New Jersey, August 5, 2010. Aston Associates today released a timely book titled “Creating a Great Bank: Achieving Superior Performance After the Perfect Storm,” meeting the needs of private equity investors and regulators to assess how to navigate through the current period of uncertainty as the banking industry tentatively recovers from the crisis of 2008.

Paul Allen, Chairman, Aston Associates and author of the 1997 best-selling book “Re-engineering the Bank”, says “Following the dramatic downward spiral in 2008 triggered by the sub-prime lending crisis and on the verge of a new growth cycle, the industry remains subdued. Loan growth is anemic and fee revenue is under regulatory attack. But this is also a time of opportunity for strong banks that execute exquisitely and aggressively to pursue the weak.”

Aston Associates has front-line experience in developing and implementing successful strategies in the midst of the 2008 financial crisis. John Koelmel, Chief Executive Officer, First Niagara Financial Group says “Aston Associates was a natural choice for First Niagara when we were evaluating our opportunities in the midst of the financial crisis. Ever since we partnered with Aston in 2004 to develop our Strategic Blueprint, we have found them to be an invaluable advisor. In 2009, Aston has helped us reevaluate our strategy in light of the changing economic environment; and organize our due diligence efforts around two transformative acquisitions.”

Associate Professor of Accounting at Duke's Fuqua Business School says of the book: “This book is a must-read for any stakeholder in the banking industry. I was most impressed by how the rich insights are informed by a wealth of author experiences with several successful banking clients who have prospered even during the financial crisis.”

The authors, Paul Allen, Jay Kalawar and Andy Mutch, collectively have over 70 years of experience in successfully designing and implementing bank-wide change that substantially enhances and sustains performance through banking business cycles. Additional information on Aston Associates may be found at [www.astonassociates.com](http://www.astonassociates.com).