



OKC's Max Doleh keeps five tech startups spinning at same time

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Page C004

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Max Doleh has founded and is CEO of Productive Technologies, Sigma Blood Systems, BioMarketplace.com, PERFEQTA and You-Fantastic.com. [PHOTO BY JIM STAFFORD, FOR THE OKLAHOMAN]

BY JIM STAFFORD
For The Oklahoman

Once upon a time, there was a popular juggler who appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show. He spun plates on tall flexible posts, five at a time. It was great fun to watch him keep the plates spinning as he raced from post to post.

I've met the 2016 version of that juggler. He is an Oklahoma City entrepreneur who keeps five tech-based startups all spinning at once.

Meet Max Doleh, entrepreneurial plate spinner extraordinaire. Since 2005, Doleh has founded and is CEO of Productive Technologies, Sigma Blood Systems, BioMarketplace.com, PERFEQTA and You-Fantastic.com.

With 45 employees in Oklahoma City and out of state working across the five companies in his portfolio, my first question to him was how does he keep the plates spinning all at once?

'Common thread'

"Some might think it's too many things to do all at the same time," Doleh said. "But it all boils down to what is the common thread that connects all those businesses? We are one team that develops and works on all of these businesses, and the common thread is we want to make an impact on anything

and everything we touch through technology?"

Doleh said all his businesses are actively serving customers and self-sustaining, built with no outside investment.

Beginning with Productive Technologies, his first concept of using radio frequency identification tags (RFID) to track equipment and personnel in hospitals, Doleh has focused his businesses largely in the health care and biotechnology space.

Sigma Blood Systems was spun off from Productive Technologies to focus on quality control, processing, and inventory tracking technology for the blood collection industry. It has clients nationwide.

BioMarketplace.com is an online platform that matches buyers and sellers of biotechnology services such as laboratory space, equipment, contract manufacturing, consulting and more. Think of it as Amazon.com for folks who wear white lab coats.

The two newest businesses, PERFEQTA and YouFantastic.com, are expansions of Doleh's philosophy of creating customized workflows and instilling quality control measures, as well as helping organizations maintain a thriving culture and reward team members for exceptional work.

How did Doleh acquire this incredible passion for

entrepreneurship? You can start in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

Role model was dad

"My dad built one of the prominent electrical contracting companies in the United Arab Emirates in the 1970s," Doleh said. "He built that company from nothing. I would see my dad work 60 hours a week. I would help him around the office and saw what he does best, take care of his employees and clients."

After starting college in the United Arab Emirates, Doleh came to the United States in the 1990s to complete a software engineering degree at Oklahoma State University.

After working for Williams Energy and Sequoyah Technologies in Tulsa, he received his MBA from Oklahoma City University. Relationships established at OCU's Meinders School of Business encouraged him to start his first company.

Now that he's operated startups for more than a decade in Oklahoma City, Doleh will tell you that the city's entrepreneurial environment has improved dramatically over the years. He cites the impact of MAPS and the arrival of the Oklahoma City Thunder for helping create a city in which talented people aspire to live and work.

Along the way, business advisory and finan-

cial support from the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST) and i2E, Inc., made a difference, as well.

"I cannot express enough how influential the role that OCAST and i2E played in our success," Doleh said. "Seven years ago we received an OCAST TBFP (Technology Business Finance Program) loan from i2E, and we paid it back in record time. That helped us at a critical moment to expand the business and add additional resources. The EDGE (Economic Development Generating Excellence program) grant was of tremendous help, as well."

All of Doleh's companies operate from Oklahoma City's University Research Park on three core values: Focus on quality and creativity; think as a customer; do the right thing.

"I truly love what I do and want to be around people who are committed to making a difference through innovating and creating a positive experience for those we touch," Doleh said. "And that is the definition of our team."

The entrepreneurial plates keep spinning.

Jim Stafford writes about Oklahoma innovation and research and development topics on behalf of the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science & Technology.