

Entrepreneur Profile



**NENO
DUPLAN**

CEO AND
PRESIDENT, LOCUS
TECHNOLOGIES

What it does: Organizes energy and environmental information using cloud computing.
HQ: Walnut Creek and Mountain View.
2010 revenue: \$6 million.
Number of employees: 50.
Year founded: 1997.
Source of start-up capital: Bootstrapped.
Age: 54.
Residence: Orinda.
Web site: www.locustec.com
Background: Previously worked for a large consultancy on environmental issues.

Big picture

How's business: Doing very well. Last year was one of the strongest ever.

Biggest challenge for your business at the moment: The industry that we are in is growing really fast and all the environmental change and regulation has left us with the question of whether the industry will slow or run out of steam.

What's going to change at your company in the next year: We anticipate water management being a large role.

What needs to be done to help small businesses thrive: Small businesses need to have sound principles to

build on, starting with a great idea and following through with flawless practices.

Business moves

Reason for starting business: In the early '90s ... I saw that the data tools were just not good enough for the services.

Most difficult part of decision: Bootstrap or take in financing. We decided to bootstrap and managed to become profitable in the first year.

Biggest misconception: I thought more people would get our idea. I was amazed how little vision the VCs and private equities had about our concept and the answer was almost universally that no one would want to gather and track their water and energy management online.

Biggest business strength: Our strong understanding of the sciences and engineering.

Biggest area for improvement: Water, energy and environmental emission management — we strive to provide a single cloud-based program to combine all of these elements.

Biggest risk: Seven years ago we divested completely from construction/remediation and environmental cleanups in the field. At the time it was nearly half of our revenue. ... We refocused on capturing data around these processes.

Smartest move: To enter the nuclear energy space five years ago.

What do you wish you had known from Day 1: That the industry would be so hot 10 years later.

Work routine

Most challenging task: Keeping our applications safe and secure in the cloud.

Favorite task: Talking to customers.

Least favorite task: Very detailed administrative tasks.

Source of support in a business crisis: A very strong internal management team ... We also have a network of advisors.

Dreams

Key goal yet to achieve: We want to organize the world's energy and environment.

First moves with capital windfall: Half to build new applications in the infrastructure and half to marketing and sales.

Five-year plan: Consolidate our three areas of focus and grow 30-40 percent.

Inducement to sell: Right now we aren't looking into that since the market in front of us is so big.

First choice for new career or venture: I would do this same venture over again, but just start earlier.

Personals

Most-admired entrepreneur: Steve Jobs.

Favorite pastimes: I swim. I swam the Alcatraz seven times. I also ski.

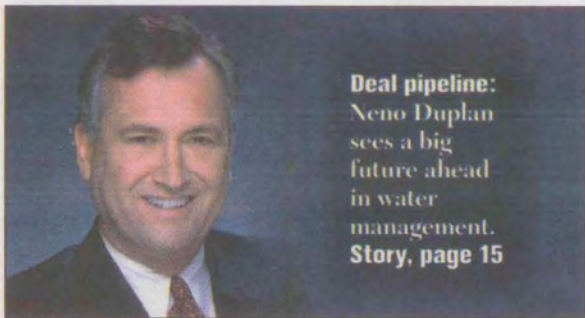
Favorite destination: Croatia.

What's on your iPhone: I use the password manager a lot and Skype. Also, we have our own applications that I test.

Automobile: Maserati.

— Krystal Peak ■

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Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, California, and at additional mailing offices. The San Francisco Business Times (ISSN 0890-0337)

SAN FRANCISCO
Business
Times

is published weekly with an additional issue in December by Business Journal Publications Inc. 275 Battery St., Suite 940, San Francisco CA 94111. Subscriptions are 1-year, \$98, 2-year \$176, 3-year \$198.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to: San Francisco Business Times, 275 Battery St., Suite 940, San Francisco CA 94111