

Entertain
all ideas,
for one
shall be king

David Fox '93


CEO AND FOUNDER, AGISTIX, INC. SILICON VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

During several years in sales and operations at a major technology company, David Fox learned a lot about the challenges of the global shipping marketplace—from the difficulty of getting large equipment through customs to the frequency of fraudulent shipping practices among small businesses. He started to formulate ways to create better visibility and control within logistics organizations, and wrote a business plan while on a two-year stint in Asia.

When he returned to the U.S. to shop his idea around, a family friend set up a meeting between Fox and an entrepreneur known throughout Silicon Valley for his 14 successful mega-start-ups. What was to be a 30-minute lunch turned into almost three advice-laden hours. “Don’t put on blinders to what you think your technology should be,” said the entrepreneur, as he pointed out how Fox’s plan could actually disrupt the logistics industry. “Don’t be afraid to entertain the ideas of others, even if they seem ridiculous as first. They may impact your own ideas in ways you couldn’t have imagined.”

“It was the break-through moment for me,” says Fox, who used the wisdom to alter his business plan until he had it just right. “It is advice I continue to live by, and at the time it was a green light.” Not long after that meeting, Fox launched—with no venture capital—Agistix, Inc., a leading provider of on-demand, carrier-neutral global logistics management solutions. Now three years old, Agistix, which has been profitable for almost two years, is one of the Valley’s fastest growing companies slated to double its gross revenues of \$40 million in the next year.

Fox has always been a keen listener, but now he is better able to distill his own and others’ ideas. “My passion for what I do seems to be infinite. I am relentless in my approach, but I have learned that sometimes I do need to slow down, listen, and review other options again, then keep on truckin’—full speed ahead.”



things you need to know to run your own business

BY VICTORIA TILNEY McDONOUGH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
CHRIS CUMMING '93

It's no secret that Denisonians leave the hill to follow life's countless roads. A browse through the alumni roster, however, reveals a significant number who head out into the business world, particularly as business owners. We can only speculate what fuels such risk-strewn, often unmapped pursuits. Perhaps it has something to do with their experience on Denison's campus, where the culture invites students to test their limits among any number of student organizations, as Zachary Lewis investigates in "Squeeze Play," beginning on page 20. Or perhaps it's the very design of liberal arts teaching and learning, which Kelli Whitlock Burton espouses in "Higher Education, Liberally Applied" on page 24. Or maybe it's a combination of determined spirit and real-life experience that bear them down the avenues of success and fulfillment. In the following pages, we ask seven entrepreneurs to each share a landmark lesson from his or her own personal enterprise.

Freelance writer Victoria Tilney McDonough lives in Alexandria, Virginia. The enterprising Chris Cumming takes his respite in Seattle and his photographs wherever the assignments lead him.