

NASHVILLE LEADERS UNDER 40

DON VIAR

Epic Technologies

A fourth generation entrepreneur, Don Viar is managing partner of Epic Technologies, a communications technology firm that focuses on the health care industry. He has led the company from a regional firm that was struggling financially to a profitable national player working in 22 states.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHER YOUNGER BUSINESS LEADERS TO DO TO FIND SUCCESS?

Live your dream. Find something that you truly love to do and you will never work a day in your life. I'm doing exactly what I thought I would be doing when I was 17 years old.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU ARE CURRENTLY FACING?

By the end of this year, we will have grown more than 70 percent this year alone. Just managing that growth from a people, process and cash flow perspective requires an enormous amount of managerial focus.

IN THREE WORDS OR LESS, HOW WOULD OTHERS DESCRIBE YOU? Faithful. Industrious. Comedian.

WHAT DOES NASHVILLE NEED TO HELP RETAIN AND ATTRACT TOP YOUNG TALENT?

Our regional colleges do a fantastic job of helping attract bright people to our region initially, but we have to do a better job of helping them enter the workforce if we are going to keep them.

Too many graduates cannot find jobs because they lack practical experience in their field. I would encourage more small businesses to create internship positions and work with local colleges to help students get experience while they continue their education.

WHAT'S THE RISKIEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE IN YOUR LIFE? Buying Epic at a time when it was losing money but being convinced that we could turn it around.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL MISTAKE AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?

It is tough to pick just one. It probably would be a failure to focus the strategic direction of Epic Technologies into the health care market sooner. For too long our client selection strategy was "if their check will clear, bring them here." We now drive approximately 75 percent of our total revenue out of ambulatory health care and are placing the bulk of our efforts into medical practices, ambulatory surgery centers, assisted-living facilities and nursing homes. That focus is a big part of our rapid growth this year.

WHAT ACTIVITY GIVES YOU THE MOST SATISFACTION WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING?

Spending quality time on the lake with my family.

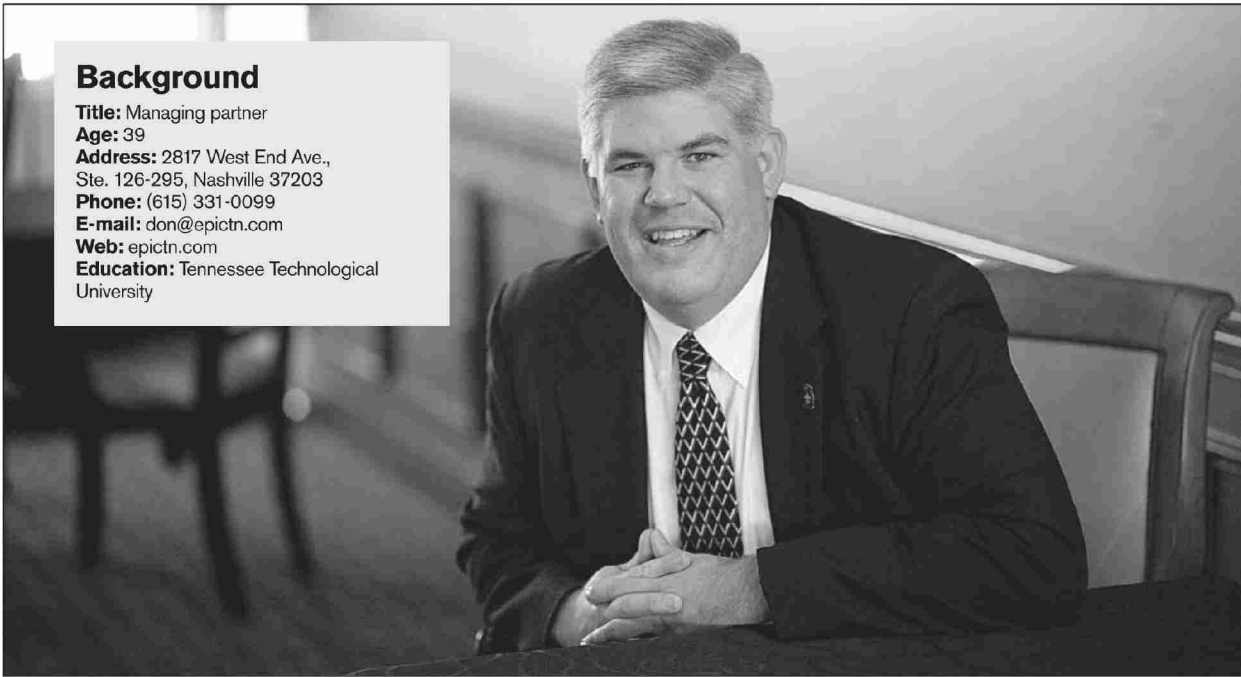
NAME SOMETHING SPECIFIC YOU'D LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH BEFORE YOU RETIRE?

I can't imagine ever retiring. However, I can imagine building a company that I can run from a houseboat.



Background

Title: Managing partner
Age: 39
Address: 2817 West End Ave.,
Ste. 126-295, Nashville 37203
Phone: (615) 331-0099
E-mail: don@epictn.com
Web: epictn.com
Education: Tennessee Technological
University



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