

Whether they are streamlining processes, providing technology solutions, connecting people through online channels, or challenging the realm of creativity, these alumni are involved with innovative businesses that are changing the way business is done. All found through social networking sites, we wanted to connect with these bears in innovation to find out more.

BY KRISTIN TODD STIRES

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Jenny Olender has not fulfilled a typical destiny as a Hankamer graduate. After working for one savings and loan legal department and two nonprofits; writing for three periodicals; working for Computer Sciences Corporation and Prodigy (bought by SBC/AT&T); serving as an associate director of event marketing; working for an ad agency and earning an MBA degree; she became the creative director at Powered, Inc. in 2007.

JENNY OLENDER

BBA '88 Creative Director, Powered, Inc.

With an initial interest in radio, television and film, Olender decided to incorporate business into the mix by earning a BBA in Business Broadcasting at Baylor. The degree plus diverse work experience has complemented her work at Powered, creating interactive online content for clients like Sony Electronics and HP.

"At Powered we build overall social marketing programs that are based on a proprietary platform (ours), learning centers, communities and ratings/reviews," she said. "We are working to bring all of the social tools available to our clients, with strategies that align and support their business goals."

Whether it is a tutorial on digital photography or a video explaining four things you should know about HDTV, Olender and her associates try to get into the minds of their clients' consumers to develop content that is user-focused and user-friendly. Social marketing strategies allow consumers to become more engaged with each other; the product, subject or company; and, in some cases, actual product development team members.

"We are continually challenged to find new ways to deliver content to make it relevant to users and meet their needs, while keeping an eye on our clients' goals and helping them learn that this kind of marketing creates long-term relationships and brand loyalty with their customers—that they are not selling to their customers, they are creating relationships," she said.

By educating consumers about new technology or products in an online community environment, Olender said her clients have seen the positive results from social marketing.

"We connect with consumers in the consideration stage of the marketing funnel," she said. "Our projects are not campaign focused, they are program focused and are long-term. These programs work in our clients' favor; since everything is online, results can be measured and brand loyalty is strengthened."

Cooking up creative ideas for content and its delivery requires inspiration. Olender said breakfast tacos are always a good start, and it never hurts when you have coworkers you like.

"Every day I work with really smart and funny people—it makes coming to work a pleasure," she said. "Sometimes you have to round up the troops and get them off-site—our creative and development teams went to see Star Trek together—when you get to the heart of it, we're all a little nerdy."

Olender said her motto is "do great work and have fun doing it." When she's not at work, you can find her playing roller derby with the Texas Rollergirls.

"Technically, I am retired," she laughed. "I spent two years as team captain of a competitive team, but now I play just for fun."

***"not selling to their customers
... creating relationships"***

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BEARS IN
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DAVID GRUBBS

BBA '07 CEO, Campus Collect, Inc.; CEO, Movement Hub, Inc.



***“Dreamers of the day
respond to the gap between
vision and reality by closing it.”
–T.E. Lawrence***

Taking one of his favorite quotes to heart, David Grubbs has closed that gap by founding two innovative companies: Campus Collect, Inc. and Movement Hub, Inc.

After graduating in 2007, Grubbs wasted no time starting his career. In fact, he had already founded Campus Collect while a sophomore at Baylor. Campus Collect provides platform mobile and web solutions for social networking, collaboration, and e-commerce marketplaces.

Grubbs is in the process of developing Noozhoo, which is a service of Campus Collect that helps students efficiently manage college life and automate mundane tasks.

“Someday we hope to connect college campuses and college students around the world, enabling them to work on class projects and activities with their classmates sitting next to them and on the other side of the globe—seamlessly,” he said.

Grubbs also co-founded Movement Hub, Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit organization that offers online services through Gohub.org. Grubbs said many people have intentions of positively impacting the world, but few know how. Gohub helps bridge that disconnect.

“Gohub matches people with service opportunities based on their specific skills, interests, abilities, and locations,” he said. “If service became an everyday part of our lives—that to me would be incredibly significant.”

Frustration is the atypical muse that drives the 24-year-old entrepreneur’s creativity.

“Creativity for me comes from wrestling with something for a long time and being deeply frustrated with the current state of things,”

Grubbs said. “I want to empower people to make a difference. I want to provide them with the tools and resources to connect, work together, learn from one another, and bring up a new generation of people that understands the world in all of its complexity.”

Grubbs said lessons he learned at Baylor helped establish a foundation that enabled him to build his companies.

“Baylor taught me to question everything and to question what I believe most of all,” he said. “There is no substitute for preparation and research before doing anything you set off to accomplish, and Baylor gave me the tools and discipline to do that effectively.”

As a young alumnus, Grubbs urges current students to understand the importance of absorbing knowledge from experienced professionals.

“Being young is an asset and a challenge,” he said. “Creating a well-balanced team of advisors will go a long way in providing the knowledge base you will need to successfully move forward.”

Grubbs has his hands full as a CEO while also serving on advisory boards for MySkyCafe, another website targeted to college students; and Baylor’s Academy for Leader Development and Civic Engagement. But don’t expect him to slow down anytime soon.

“There are always a few things in development on the back burner,” he said. “It’s not really work if you are having fun, and I am having the time of my life.”



You may not pronounce it correctly the first time, but Bruce Ballengee had his reasons for choosing the occasionally mispronounced moniker of his company, Pariveda. Ballengee serves as co-founder and CEO of Pariveda (pronounced par e vay da) Solutions, an IT consulting company. The name, derived from Sanskrit, means “gaining the benefits of complete knowledge,” which is the problem-solving approach of the company.

**BEARS IN
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BRUCE BALLENGEE
BBA '79 Co-founder & CEO, Pariveda Solutions, Inc.

“A critical nuance of ‘Pariveda’ is that you cannot achieve perfection—in this case, perfect or complete knowledge,” Ballengee said. “That is reserved for God. It instills a healthy jolt of humility into our thinking while we’re in hot pursuit of excellence.”

Originally from Corpus Christi, Texas, Ballengee graduated from Baylor majoring in Finance and Economics. After receiving an MBA in Finance from the University of Chicago, he returned to Texas, taking a job with the management information consulting division of then Arthur Andersen and Company. Ballengee said he also had other reasons for returning to Texas.

“My fiancée was a Baylor undergrad at the time,” he said. “She is now my wife of 28 years, but she laid down the law against colder climates!”

Ballengee first became interested in IT while working for Andersen and participating in classroom and on-the-job training to learn necessary skill sets. Years later, he established Pariveda Solutions in 2003. The learning process is something Ballengee now focuses on with employees.

“Our employees are strongly advised to engage in a lifetime of learning and deliberate practice,” he said. “They benefit from learning and the effects are cumulative and permanent—the more they learn and practice, the wider the capability gap they open on our competition. Continuous practice makes this personal advantage sustainable well past retirement.”

Along with skilled employees, another advantage for the company is using “varying degrees of novelty,” most often with suggestions of applying information technologies to solve clients’ problems.

“Once we suggested and later implemented repurposing the genetic algorithm (artificial intelligence) used in a retail PC-based computer game to automatically schedule a fleet of oil tankers,” Ballengee said. “The application was able to improve operating income by 20 percent.”

While at Baylor, Ballengee said he spent countless hours with faculty of the business school and the debate program who showed him how to “live a purposeful life in the service of others.” The experience led him to become a strong advocate of mentoring, which he says is part of what he enjoys most about his work.

“The best part of my work is developing talented people throughout their careers from college graduate to vice president/partner,” Ballengee said. **“That involves showing them the way, coaching and mentoring them along the route, savoring their accomplishments, and urging them to pay it forward.”**

Settling for the present is not in the cards for Ballengee. Utilizing a characteristic of any successful businessperson, he prefers to think futuristically.

“Pariveda is designed to explore (hopefully successfully) a new business model for the emerging knowledge economy of the 21st and later centuries,” he said. “We want to be better and believe we must be different to do it.”

Kirk Leitch does not have a predecessor to look to in his newly created position as director of innovation at Cook Children's Health Care System; however, he is up for the challenge. Formerly the organization's director of IT, Leitch's career has evolved to meet industry needs.

"Cook Children's understands that the landscape for healthcare will be changing, and we as healthcare professionals may have to be able to do more with less," he said. "Innovation will be the key to being successful in the future."

Leitch is not alone in his quest for healthcare innovation. Externally, he has looked to the innovation team at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester for inspiration. Internally, Leitch works with physician thought leaders and a supportive administration that keeps his forward-thinking job moving in the right direction.

Innovation is such a priority for the organization that plans for a clinic devoted to innovation are on the agenda. Leitch said the innovation clinic will be a fully functional primary care clinic, but will also be a facility to cultivate new ideas and accommodate cutting-edge technologies without disrupting provided clinical care.

"It will be a place where we can try new pieces of hardware or software and look at different clinic setups," he said. "Through strategic partnerships with our vendors, we'll be able to test out new technologies to determine whether or not we need to look at widespread adoption across all our clinics."

Aside from new technologies and ideas, innovation can also be defined by reshaping existing processes, such as increasing efficiency in operations.

"Innovation takes many forms," Leitch said. "As healthcare and medical insurance changes, our physicians and their staff will likely be asked to see more patients in a given day. We have to figure out ways to streamline processes. Maybe that means automating the intake process, speeding up checkout or providing tools to the physicians and staff that help them save time."

Leitch said he learned valuable lessons while at Baylor that he has applied to his work ethic.

"Two of the most important things I learned at Baylor that have stuck with me throughout my career are hard work and willingness to embrace change," he said. "Everyone looks for people who perform at a high level, but to also find people who have an aptitude for being a change agent within their organization while accepting changes in the marketplace, that can be a very powerful combination."

Baylor continues to stay in the family for Leitch, who also has two siblings that graduated from the university. His daughter, Rachel, is currently a sophomore in the business school who plans to focus on music and entertainment marketing. Leitch advises current students, including his daughter, to keep a clear focus in order to be successful professionals.

"Keep your goals ahead of you and do what is necessary to achieve them within the framework of your faith and guiding principles," he said. "Inevitably, that will teach you to have a good work ethic and be able to handle change."

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KIRK LEITCH

BBA '84 Director of Innovation,
Cook Children's Health Care System