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People to watch: Mark Foley

A conversation with key players in San Diego's technology and life sciences industries.

March 18, 2005

Age: 46

Title: Chief executive officer

Company: RF Magic

Founded: 2000

Employees: 68

Venture capital raised: \$40 million

What does RF Magic do?

We're enabling the next generation of consumer electronics, with a focus on the consumer broadband and digital entertainment markets. We do that by developing highly integrated radio frequency chips. We focus our solutions on things like the digital home, mobile communications and networking. Our products include satellite, cable terrestrial set-top boxes, wireless modems. These are the type of products that ultimately our chips enable.



But our technology is also applicable to cell phones, PCs, laptops and many other products. Ultimately, we simplify the radio frequency problems our customers face as they bring their new products to market.

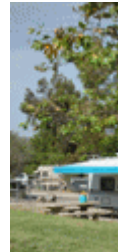
Give us an example.

We have a product that goes into the DBS market – DBS is satellite television. There's an antenna on the roof. There's a box next to your TV and there's a cable that goes between them. If you use our technology by the antenna, through that one cable we can send programming for essentially two different functions. So you can watch TV and record a show on your TiVo at the same time.

Has the market been slow to materialize?

Just the opposite. It's the hottest thing going. Because we had the vision five years ago, it's more validation for the momentum we have now. The market is great. Consumer is where it's at. Broadband is where it's at. Digital is where

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it's at and we're right in the middle."

But companies have been talking about the digital home for years without a lot to show for it.

That's a good point. Some startups have tried to leap many generations and do products that are too far in the future. What we've done, we tried to

look at what's here now, what's next and maybe try to look out one or two generations and provide products that enable that development.

Our first two products were targeted to wireless broadband, and we're shipping there today. We are probably the largest shipper of radio frequency products into that market. But the market has been slower to develop. Thanks to our business model, we've been able to move into other consumer markets.

How did RF Magic begin?

I went to ComStream in the late '80s, and Dale Hancock, the co-founder here, was the very first engineer I hired. I came up through the ranks in engineering and then on to marketing. Then in '97 a group from ComStream called High Media was acquired by Conexant. We were there for three years, and then Dale and I decided we wanted to start our own business so we started RF Magic.

What about your job do you brag about?

We have a world-class team of radio frequency professionals here. When Dale and I started the business, we wanted to bring this team together to solve the most complex consumer electronics problems with world-first products, and we're doing that. At the same time, we're building a business based on very solid fundamentals. We already have shipped our first couple million chips, including an award-winning silicon tuner.

– MIKE FREEMAN

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