

IN **person**

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Talking with
DAN ROSEN
CEO of Dan Rosen
& Associates

This spring, Dan Rosen left Frazier Technology Ventures, the Seattle venture capital firm he co-founded in 2000, to spend more time working with early-stage technology startups and serving as chairman of Neah Power Systems, a Bothell fuelcell company. He's now CEO of his own early-stage technology investment and advisory firm. Rosen, 56, spoke to the Puget Sound Business Journal about his career transition, the state of venture capital today, and his interests outside the office.

ON LEAVING FRAZIER TECHNOLOGY: As an individual you have a heck of a lot more freedom and flexibility than you have in the confines of a partnership. When you work closely with entrepreneurs as a venture capitalist, you really are on the other side of the table very often. I like being on the same side of the table with the entrepreneur. I like being able to have my interest and their interest coincide completely. Working the way I am right now, I'm able to do that more and more.

ON WHY HE'S DRAWN TO EARLY-STAGE STARTUPS: When you're just deciding what your product ought to be and you have a great technology, the world is still your oyster. That's when people with experience can add enormous value. And frankly that's what I love to do the most. Maybe I'm being a bit nostalgic, but I think the venture industry used to be more like that than they are today.

ON THE MOST COMMON PITFALLS FOR YOUNG TECH COMPANIES: More early-stage startups die of indigestion than starvation. Usually what happens is they try to do too many things and they fail because of that, not because they've run out of resources. Focusing and prioritizing becomes a critical aspect of your success. A second pitfall I find is not understanding what their true core competency is and trying to use it. One piece of advice I give in my role at the Alliance of Angels is, right up front, tell me about your company and why it's unique. It's amazing how many people do not do that.

ON HIS PASSION FOR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY: My love of computers and technology as well as photography made me a buff. I bought one of the first digital cameras, a Canon. I have thousands and thousands of negatives which I have been in the process of scanning into digital form. It'll probably be a lifelong project. I'm working my way back through my archives.

ON HIS LOVE FOR ANIMALS: I'm on the board of the Humane Society of King County and am pretty active in that. I'm an animal lover and have a little Maltese dog ("Shugie," short for "Sugar") ... I just love being around animals, particularly dogs. They're always so happy to see you when you come home. I've been known on occasion to take my dog to work or business meetings. Most people think you're crazy when you do it, but occasionally people are animal lovers and think it's great.

—As told to ERIC ENGLEMAN

DAN ROSEN PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

Rosen combines his love for digital art and animals in this enhanced image of his Maltese "Shugie."

