

# Nike in My Kitchen

Kip Fyfe Co-founder, President and CEO of Dynastream Innovations Inc.

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The genesis for starting Dynastream goes to Ken Fyfe, my brother. Ken was your typical “mad professor” with an idea, a dream and a vision. Being an avid runner, and track coach – he wanted a running tool for him and those around him that would allow a runner to self-monitor how fast and how far they were running, as they were running.

He started out developing SpeedMax (the running Speedometer) at his university lab and at home in his spare time. His idea was to use electronics to measure how fast you go. That is where I came in. My expertise was in electronics and software, as well as putting together a development team, and found myself regularly on the end of a phone answering questions and providing brotherly advice.

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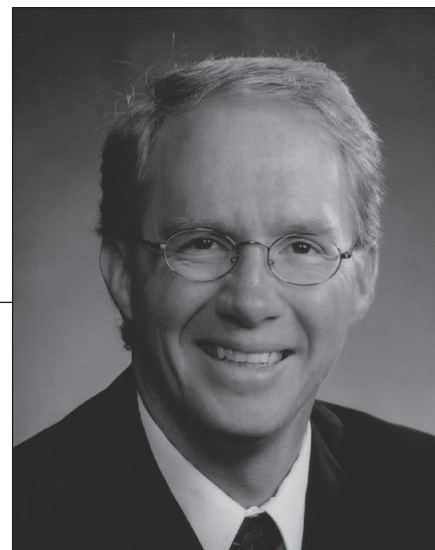
After he got a prototype working, we got a lot more serious about starting a company. So we did. The key when starting your own business is to attract the right people. A team was carefully

selected and we worked evenings and weekends on developing a more stable prototype that we could show to potential interested buyers and customers.

SpeedMax needed plenty of testing. We tried treadmills, but the one we had was not so good. We tried police radars which worked well, but they had a higher calling and were being used for the betterment of society. We settled upon a specially rigged baby jogger – it could be easily pushed when running, and could accurately provide us with how fast we were running. Imagine several adults huddling around a laptop computer, taking their turn at pushing a baby jogger around the block. It looked even stranger because there was not a baby as cargo, but a 20Kg bag of flour (needed for stability) and a computer. We had neighbors with binoculars “looking out for us” and the occasional police officer stopping in to make sure we were okay. Most of this great research was done between 9 pm and midnight – and of course in the dead of winter.

In 1999, with Ken advising from the U of A, there were 4 of us working full-time on developing SpeedMax. The challenge was to spend the money we had in the right places, being extremely careful with it. We had gathered the initial seed funding from our own wallets, and people that loved us (thanks Moms and Dads) – so we were on a tight budget, working out of a kitchen and a garage. It sounds funny, setting up a business like this, but it was actually quite effective – for a while – until potential customers started to come to see us and wanted to see our operation. We had Nike at the kitchen table doing preliminary negotiations and were off to the garage for a demo and “lab tour”.

Realizing that we were on to something



great, and that the home business approach could only take us so far, we knew we needed investor funding and room for some serious expansion. We set up shop in a great little town, Cochrane, Alberta, and got right to designing and building products. Cochrane may seem an odd choice, but it was an obvious one for us as all of the founders live here, we are 15 minutes closer to the mountains than Calgary, and we have the best ice cream in Canada (MacKay’s Homemade Ice Cream).

In the end, you have to make sure you enjoy your work, because there is a lot of it. Starting your own company can be all consuming. But it all worked out well because the dream and vision developed into a real working prototype that Nike did take on as a premier product in their technology lineup for 2000. Now we have 13 products that are being produced, and a list of global customers whose names and brands most people recognize. As you would imagine, the company has grown and changed a lot since those early days. We have diversified our technology, our markets, and our products. Sure, we still build the world’s best speed and distance technology, but we also have world-class innovative RF communications products and our markets range from sport monitoring, to wellness, to medical where our technology is being used to improve the lifestyles of amputees, diabetics and the public at large. I am happy to be part of a growing company that not only is a great place to work but is based on innovative thinking that is changing and improving lifestyles.