

Brent Ahrens



Brent Ahrens is a native of Port Clinton, Ohio and attended the University of Dayton, earning Bachelor and MS degrees in Mechanical Engineering ('85, '86). While an undergrad, he worked in the Materials Science Labs at UDRI. As a grad student, Brent worked on various WPAFB-supported projects at UD.

After graduating from UD, Brent joined IAP Research in Kettering as a Research Engineer. This Company conducts research into various applications of electromagnetic (EM) technologies including EM launchers (rail-guns) and shock-inducing devices. He worked at IAP from 1986 to 1991.

Following his time at IAP, Brent joined Ethicon, Inc., a division of Johnson & Johnson (J&J), located in Cincinnati. While at J&J, he worked in various areas including New Product Development, Business Development, Market Research, and also conducted patent research and analysis. This division of J&J develops and markets medical devices used in surgery.

In 1995, Brent left Ethicon for another tour in academia, this time at Dartmouth College. He earned an MBA from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth in 1997.

Upon graduating from Dartmouth, Brent moved to the San Francisco Bay area to work for a small medical device company, General Surgical Innovations (GSI). While at GSI, he led the Business Development and Marketing areas in addition to a part of the sales efforts in the Western US.

During his time at Dartmouth and GSI, Brent developed an interest in the Venture Capital (VC) business and a desire to work in this sector of the economy. His break into the VC arena came in 1999 when he was asked to join the prestigious Kauffman Fellows Program, a two-year fellowship in the venture capital industry. At that time he joined Canaan Partners for his Fellowship and he began to pursue his desire to be an investor in novel healthcare technologies. Canaan Partners is a global VC firm that invests in the healthcare and IT sectors.

Since joining Canaan in 1999 as a Kauffman Fellow, and now as a General Partner of the firm, Brent has led a number of investments in companies developing cutting-edge medical products that address significant unmet medical needs including: a treatment for stroke patients, an automatic CPR device, novel antibiotics, a new treatment for emphysema, products to continuously measure blood glucose in diabetics, and treatments for back pain. A number of these companies have had profitable exits, either through Initial Public Offerings (IPO's) – DexCom (DXCM) and Durata Therapeutics (DRTX) – or by acquisition to large corporations including – Peninsula (sale to J&J), Calixa (sale to Cubist), Cerexa (sale to Forest Labs), and Revivant (sale to Zoll Medical). In addition, he serves on the boards of several other private companies.

Over the years, Brent has been a guest speaker in various academic and industry forums, including lecturing at Dartmouth College, Tel Aviv University, Stanford University, University of California Berkeley, Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) and, of course, at the University of Dayton. Brent is also a Professional Engineer and is a named inventor on several patents. He currently resides in Los Altos, California.