

Orthopedics

This Week

Randy Theken's New Company and Return to Orthopedics

BY KIM DELMONICO

Randy Theken, one of the most influential and important entrepreneurs in modern orthopedics, has returned to the industry he helped create.

For most of us, the last time we saw an article about Randy was 2009, when he sold Theken Spine, Theken Disc, and Therics to Integra LifeSciences Holdings Corporation for more than \$200 million. That company is now one of the key components of SeaSpine Holdings Corporation, under the direction of another legendary entrepreneur—Keith Valentine of both Sofamor Danek and NuVasive, Inc. fame.

Theken's restlessly inventive mind found a number of interesting outlets while he was waiting out his five year non-compete. And now, he is back.

Welcome back, Randy. We missed you. By the way, been up to anything?

A Lot, Actually



All photos courtesy of Randy Theken and Dove Audio Visual

In fact, selling his companies created the opportunity for Theken to take his talents and energy in some very interesting directions.

One of the most notable projects is Theken's partnership with developer Steve Coon. Together they revitalized major swaths of northeastern Ohio, which has struggled with high unemployment and deteriorating cities—like

Youngstown, Akron and Canton—for decades. In Canton, Theken and Coon restored and then converted beautiful buildings from the 1930s into The Historic Onesto Lofts and Bliss Lofts. Their efforts are helping to attract new investment and interest to downtown Canton and Akron.

Theken also became a partner in a group of assisted-living centers and then jumped into the consumer products world by investing in and becoming a major owner of a Chicago-based acne medicine company.

Finally, Theken embarked on what is probably one of the secret passions of a majority of biomedical engineers and entrepreneurs all over the world—buying and selling exotic vehicles—everything from Ferraris to Porsches to Lamborghini.



All photos courtesy of Randy Theken and Dove Audio Visual

Why? Because he was “bored and it looked like a good business.”

Over these past few years, through Fox-trot Auto, Theken bought and sold over 150 vehicles. Theken says the exotic car industry delivered some of his greatest returns on investment. For example, in 2010, Theken bought four of the first super Ferraris ever made. A 1984 Ferrari GTO, F-50, F-40 and Enzo. Theken bought the Enzo for \$1.2 million and sold it for around \$2.8 million.

What was the key to his success? Theken said that he got in at the right time—and that the key is finding vintage, numbered vehicles with very low mileage.

Theken’s success in renovating and redeveloping a beautiful historic buildings, assisted-living centers, skincare lines, and exotic cars speaks to a remarkable and truly unique individual—someone blessed with not only tremendous capabilities but a passion for treasuring what is timeless, beautiful and, ultimately, the best of what people can do and become.

Who Is Randy Theken?

Randy Theken (pronounced “taken”) was born and raised in Northeast Ohio. A hard worker from a young age, Theken recalls pumping gas at his family’s service station beginning when he was barely able to reach the top of a gas pump at seven years old. Theken started his first company, Satellite Communication, to install large uplink satellite dishes when he was still in college.

After graduating from high school, Theken spent two years working at a fossil fuel nuclear power company. Theken recalls spending every lunch break hanging out in the office of a programmer who worked on the site. Theken recalls his fascination with the

computer and the programmer telling him every day, “Kid, save your money, go to college.”

Which he did.

At the University of Akron, Theken majored in engineering and credits Rick Nemer, an electrical engineering professor, and Glen Njus, Ph.D., a biomedical engineering professor, for setting him on the path to becoming who he is today. Dr. Njus gave Theken a job in his lab that helped him pay for college and instilled in him a love for engineering. Under the tutelage of Dr. Njus, Theken graduated University of Akron with bachelor’s and masters’ degrees in electrical, mechanical, and biomedical engineering.

Theken Companies

In 1992, he founded Theken Orthopaedic, a company that provided mechanical testing, product development, and FDA regulatory services. From 1992 up through about 2000, over 125 orthopedic companies made the trek to Akron, Ohio, to do their implant testing because of Theken.

Six years later, he founded Theken Spine to focus on spinal implant and device development. Theken Spine developed its own extensive distribution network, inventory supply chain, and marketing team—growing to approximately \$60 million in revenue.

In 2003, he founded Theken Disc to specifically focus on R&D development of next generation spinal arthroplasty devices. Theken Disc created the first polymer-based artificial disc with embedded microelectronics.

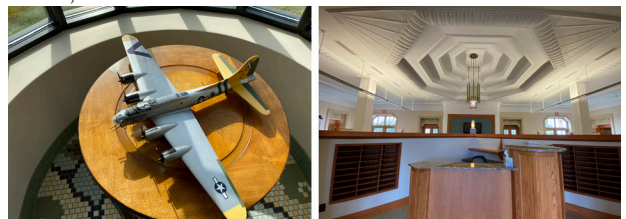
Finally, in July 2005, Theken purchased Therics, LLC, from Princeton, New Jer-

sey-based Tredegar Corporation. Therics designed, developed, and manufactured a variety of synthetic bone substitute products using its 3D-printing patents—Therics was one of the originators of 3D-printing.

In 2009, Integra LifeSciences, acquired three of Theken’s companies (Theken Spine, Theken Disc, and Therics). A new division within Integra was created (Integra Spine) and Theken was appointed its President. Theken operated Integra Spine through 2010, after which point, he had a five-year non-compete within the medical arena.

The Theken Terminal Building

Everything Theken does, he does with style. In 2005, he purchased the historic Akron airport terminal building from the city of Akron to use as his company headquarters.



All photos courtesy of Randy Theken and Dove Audio Visual

Theken spent two years and millions of dollars renovating and restoring it to its original art deco splendor. Restoring the terminal was a labor of love: Theken worked for months to match the original 1929 terrazzo floors and had custom windows made to match the originals. Theken tracked down the makers of the original light poles that stood on the property. A footnote on blueprints that Theken obtained from the city noted that Union Metal of Canton, Ohio, which had been around since the 1860s had manufactured them. Theken met with Union Metal and found out that it still had the original castings. Theken had the light poles recast and put them in the identical spot.



All photos courtesy of Randy Theken and Dove Audio Visual

The renovation of the terminal building earned Theken awards in Akron and Cleveland, including the 2011 Distinguished Preservation Achievement Award from the Cleveland Restoration Society and Best Commercial Rehabilitation co-winner from the Ohio Heritage awards.

Randy Returns to Orthopedics With...FOUR Companies

With four new orthopedic companies it's safe to say that Randy Theken is back.

In 2014, Theken founded NextStep Arthropedix. NextStep is an Akron, Ohio-based medical device manufacturer focused on designing, developing, manufacturing, and distributing joint replacement implant products such as hips, knees, and shoulder implant systems.

NextStep is bringing 3D-printing to the field of joint replacement implants. Since the 2017 launch of its iNSitu Hip System, NextStep's innovative components have been implanted into 4,500 hips. NextStep developed a 3D-printed acetabular cup system to improve upon traditional, plasma-spray coated cups. The issue being the risk that a plasma-sprayed implant might delaminate in the patient.

In January 2019, NextStep released its newly-developed hip system, The Blade.

NextStep currently has five products on the market with an additional six at the FDA waiting clearance.

In 2017, Theken launched Slice Manufacturing Studios, a full-spectrum contract manufacturing studio—offering development, prototyping, mechanical testing, final production, and sterile cleaning and packaging. Slice's new 30,000 square foot laboratory and manufacturing facility is located next to Theken's historic airport terminal facility that houses NextStep Arthropedix.

In 2018, Theken founded LaunchPoint, a corporate innovation division that focuses on the development of orthopedic devices, materials, and technologies. The Ohio Development Services Agency's technology-based economic development initiative, Ohio Third Frontier, awarded LaunchPoint an initial \$3 million matching fund and Θ Ceramics is one of LaunchPoint's first strategic investments.

Θ Ceramics manufactures and markets an advanced Mg-PSZ ceramic for the orthopedic implant market. In 2019, Theken acquired this technology from BioPro Medical, an originator of the material 30+ years ago.

Θ Ceramics now owns the proprietary compounding, manufacturing, FDA Master Files, IP, and methods for

this ceramic material. Theken's goal is to provide a hip component material which would be superior to cobalt chrome (CoCr). The Mg-PSZ does not have any risk nickel allergy complications, which has happened with CoCr, while also being able to resist biofilm infection. According to Theken, retrieval studies have demonstrated that this ceramic material is truly superior.

Of course, Θ Ceramics is jumping into a market which is currently dominated in the U.S. by CeramTec GmbH, a German company, and in Japan by Kyocera—which is entering the U.S. market with their ceramic components in 2020.

Collectively, Theken's four companies are known as the Theken Group.

Words of Wisdom From Theken

Theken has been successful, given back to his community, been an integral part of healing hundreds of thousands of patients and built a life of enduring value and integrity.

What would Theken advise those who aspire to follow in his footsteps?

Theken told OTW, "A lot of people go after what they are passionate about—but at the end of the day, one should consider what their God-gifted talent is. What's the one thing that you do well with the least amount of effort? So many people follow their passion—and that's great. They may get there, and they may not. But at the end of the day, if you go do what you're really God-gifted at with the least amount of effort, you will be successful."

And... "Stay humble." Wise words, from Randy Theken. ♦