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PEOPLE TO WATCH IN 2014

Meet nine key players deeply involved in local business, science and community endeavors

BUSINESS



BILL FULTON, San Diego city planning director

MARK DANKBERG, ViaSat CEO

DEBRA REED, Sempra Energy chairman and CEO

TY HAUTER, Good Time Design CEO

TOM WATLINGTON, Sotera Wireless CEO

DAVID FIELD, OneRoof Energy CEO

ROBERT REYES & GABRIELA DOW, StartupCircle

KEITH MURPHY, Organovo chairman and CEO



ROBERT REYES AND GABRIELA DOW, StartupCircle founder and partner

Startups run by women are priority

Since its inception in 2007, StartupCircle has established itself as one of San Diego's most effective organizations working with entrepreneurs, and it couldn't have been done without founder Robert Reyes and partner Gabriela Dow.

Dow, the owner of Mora Dow Consulting, joined as a partner in 2012 to help take the lead on strategic initiatives.

Last year, the pair were instrumental in bringing Silicon Valley accelerator Plug and Play Tech Center to San Diego, which gave 13 local startup companies \$25,000 each in funding, along with a place at StartupCamp, a training program for young companies.

That is the most public of many quiet efforts Reyes and Dow are making to bring early-stage investment to San Diego. Their goal is to bring more than \$1 billion in investments to the area over the next five years.

Meanwhile, StartupCircle has grown into a community of entrepreneurs 5,000 strong.

They're not stopping there, though. Dow and Reyes want to make women feel welcome in the entrepreneurial community, so are pushing for membership, previously 95 percent male, to be at least half female. They also want to invest in 10 female-run companies. Of the seven companies that won the second Plug and Play round in 2012, three were run by women.

Finally, they're focusing more heavily than ever this coming year to fund San Diego-based companies that have some cross-border element in their business plan.

- Katherine Poythress • U-T

- Illustrations by Adam Vieyra • U-T