

Habra has sold 4 firms since college graduation

Jacques Habra said he and his family are probably more in love with being U.S. citizens than many who are born here.

Habra, 33, was born in Lebanon. "We realize how incredible it is to be in a country with such opportunities and freedom and a system of checks and balances that protect individuals' opportunities," Habra said. One of Habra's companies, Noospheric, provides strategic consulting for small to mid-sized emerging companies, developing business models, marketing strategy and operational plans to achieve strong results.

Noospheric has been around for seven years. It has partnered with more than 15 companies, and performed a range of consulting duties, from providing marketing and technical support to acting as in-house CEO. Habra's firm also has acted as an angel investor.

His other company, First Click SEO, increases the visibility of Web sites to their target market, working to increase search engine rankings, traffic and ultimately transactions.

Since graduating from the University of Michigan, Habra has grown and sold four other companies he has owned, a feat he considers his greatest accomplishment so far. "I developed a passion for growing companies and ultimately selling them, and feel that the Internet is the best way to reach a target market."

In Santa Barbara, he's involved with the American Heart Association, the Red Cross, and Sarah House, a small not-for-profit organization that provides hospice and end-of-life care to low-income peo-

ple.

What was your first job?

"I had a paper route delivering the Kalamazoo, Mich., Gazette. I was 12 years old. I remember my father waking me up at 5 in the morning on Sundays in French, because we spoke French at home. He would lean into me and say, 'Courage, courage,' telling me to have courage because I didn't want to go out in the snow and deliver papers to 300 people.

Where's your favorite place to get coffee?

"Finestra on Figueroa or Northstar Coffee [both on State Street in Santa Barbara.]"

What are the top three songs on your iPod?

"'The Way I Are' by Timbaland, 'Banana Pancakes' by Jack Johnson and 'So Lonely' by The Police."

Where will you take your next vacation?

"I think I'm going to head to Peru and Brazil and Argentina. Maybe Panama, too."

Where's your favorite local getaway?

"I love going to Big Sur. I go to the Ventana Inn."

Who's your role model?

"My mom is definitely a role model. She's constantly improving herself and finding opportunities to learn a new language or discover some new skill. She just reinvests herself, and I love that about her."

What are the next three movies in your Netflix queue?

"'Superbad,' 'Cashback,' and 'Weirdsville.'"



Habra