

ATG Interviews Daniel J. Doody

Former President, CEO, & Owner, Doody Enterprises, Inc.

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At the end of 2023, it was announced that Tim Butzen is now the owner of Doody Enterprises, Inc. and that Daniel J. Doody is retiring after a fulfilling 46-year career in medical publishing. *ATG* caught up with Dan to chat with him about a look-back on his career, and plans for his retirement.

ATG: *Tell us about your early career path and how you ended up in medical publishing.*

DD: I obtained my master's degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in 1977. While completing my studies, we were visited by recruiters from multiple media outlets. One of the recruiters was the Vice President of Marketing for a scientific, technical, medical (STM) publisher in New York City called Marcel Dekker, Inc., the one and only scientific publisher among the many media outlets recruiting at Medill. (Marcel Dekker, Inc. was subsequently acquired by Taylor and Francis.) The Vice President from Marcel Dekker who came to Medill to recruit graduate students to her firm was Mary Ann Liebert, who left Marcel Dekker more than 30 years ago to start her own firm, [Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers](#). She had done her undergraduate work at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, and it was her observation that an education in journalism would prepare someone well for a career in scientific publishing. On the basis of that initial interview, Marcel Dekker, Inc. hired me to be an acquisitions editor in training in the fields of engineering and mathematics. Within six months, due to the departure of the medical editor, I was offered the opportunity to become Dekker's medical acquisitions editor, thus launching a 46+-year career in medical publishing.

ATG: *Please name a few career highlights that stand out.*

DD: In addition to the hiring story at Marcel Dekker that I just recounted, other career highlights include getting hired as a medical editor at Year Book Medical Publishers, Inc. in October of 1979, allowing my family and me to return to our native Chicago from New York City. While Year Book was eventually merged with Mosby in 1989 forming Mosby-Year Book (which was subsequently purchased by Elsevier), in the ten years I worked at Year Book, the company grew from losing money on \$10MM in annual revenue to being highly profitable with annual revenues of \$45MM. So, it was very exciting to be part of that company during a period of such dynamic growth. A highlight from the mid-'80s to mid-'90s was attending the annual Frankfurt Book Fair several years in a row.



I left Mosby-Year Book to start Doody Publishing, Inc. (the forerunner to Doody Enterprises, Inc.) in January 1993. Doody Publishing was a very early adopter of the Internet. We introduced the online version of Doody's Journal at the MLA meeting in May of 1995. We were the only publisher on the exhibit floor charging money for our digital content. Other early adopters at that meeting were using the web strictly for promotion purposes (called brochureware at the time) or were offering their content for free, certain they would attract enough traffic to be entirely advertising supported. That business model had a relatively short shelf life.

Over the past 31 years there have been countless adventures and many highlights, but perhaps the most memorable was to survive the dot.com bust of the early 2000s.

ATG: *Can you tell our readers how and when was Doody Enterprises, Inc. formed?*

DD: As mentioned, I originally incorporated my company as Doody Publishing, Inc. and we launched our business in January of 1993. After 15 years in the medical publishing business, I decided to go out on my own. At the time I felt medical publishing was a grossly overpublished niche. I was interested in making an original contribution. I was intrigued by two publishing models, one was Current Contents, founded by the legendary [Eugene Garfield](#), and the other was *CHOICE Magazine*, a book review periodical published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) division of the American Library Association. Influenced by the apparent success of those two products and aware there was not a systematic way of providing reviews of newly published medical books, I decided to develop a timely, authoritative, comprehensive, and fair way to publish expert reviews of the 3,000 new books published in the health sciences every year. The Doody's Review Service™ system became the foundation of the company and is the single foundational element that has accounted for the company's durability and success. (Doody Publishing, Inc. was reorganized in 2003 under the name of Doody Enterprises, Inc., the name it still operates under.)

ATG: *Over the years, your connections with medical librarians seem to have led to some of the services and products of Doody Enterprises, Inc. How did some of those come about?*

DD: From the earliest days, we have described our products and services as developed by librarians for librarians. We had a Library Board of Advisors even before we incorporated the

company. Back in 1992, I met with about a dozen librarians active in health sciences libraries in Chicago to get their advice on the need for a systematic and comprehensive medical book review system. That group was responsible for developing the taxonomy for Doody's Review Service®. They also introduced me to department heads at the six (at that time) academic medical centers in the Chicago area, many of whom accepted my invitation to serve as the first Editorial Review Group Chair in their specialty area(s) of interest.

In 2004 when it was announced that the Brandon-Hill List, a free acquisitions tool medical librarians had been using for the last 30+ years, was no longer going to be published, our Library Board of Advisors served as the sounding board for our plan to fill the void in the wake of the demise of the Brandon-Hill List with a new product that relied on the virtual collaboration of about 100 librarians. The result: the first edition of *Doody's Core Titles® (DCT)*, published in December of 2004. This year the company will publish the 21st version of *DCT*, due to the continued contributions of *DCT*'s Librarian Selectors.

When the pandemic froze the world in March of 2020, librarians did not freeze, continuing to work every day (albeit most of them virtually) and providing the essential work of keeping front-line workers informed with the latest information about what we were learning about COVID-19. By May of 2020, *DEI* decided to publish a list of 90 essential books on subjects that were related to this infectious disease outbreak on our publicly available website, *Doody's Collection Development Monthly*. Within a short time, this list generated several thousand hits. That gave birth to the quarterly *Doody's Special Topics Lists*, a publication that is overseen by an Editorial Board of five health sciences librarians. Each quarterly list is researched and chosen by a panel of three librarians who are subject matter experts in the topic area of the list.

ATG: Your [retirement letter](#) alluded to the fact that you are pleased and hopeful about the future of Doody Enterprises, Inc. in new hands, with someone you mentored over the years at the helm- would you agree?

DD: Yes. To elaborate, let me excerpt one of my quotes from the press release announcing the sale of Doody Enterprises:

"I'm so grateful that the company is in the hands of such a capable, creative, and forward-thinking owner as Tim Butzen. Tim's competence is wide-ranging and exceptional. What is especially remarkable are his personal characteristics. He never wavers from his positive outlook, and he always leads with kindness. It's hard to imagine a better outcome when transferring the ownership of Doody Enterprises, Inc., than selling to such a trusted, valuable employee. This transaction ensures continuity for what has been a remarkably stable and successful company."

ATG: What are you most excited about or looking forward to in your retirement? Any plans you'd like to share?

DD: For the last few years, I have been volunteering at a grammar school (PreK 3 – 8) about a mile from my home that educates 200+ children from the most impoverished neighborhood in Chicago. The education the kids get is outstanding; but the school is terribly under resourced, and the children come from homes where the needs are many. Since I believe that education is one of the keys to breaking generational poverty, my volunteer work has been focused on bringing more resources from the community (human and financial) to advance the mission of the school and to help stabilize the homes the children come from. It's been tremendously satisfying the way in which the community has responded to the opportunity to support the school's mission, its students, and their families. 🌳