

# BUSINESSDISTRICT

Austin's Business Magazine

## HELLO, MY NAME IS MATT

*And Through Door 64,  
Everyone in the Tech Industry  
Knows His Name*



*Central Texas Economic Outlook •  
Opportunity Austin 2.0 • How to be  
Everywhere • The Workplace Generation Gap*



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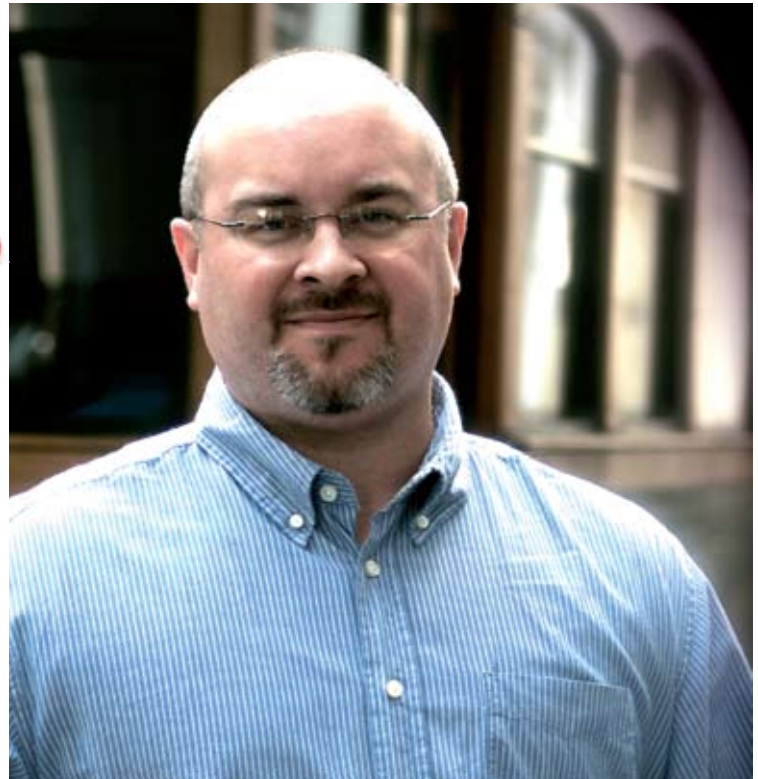
# BUSINESSDISTRICT



**OUR  
ISSUES  
ARE YOUR  
ISSUES.**



By Matt Scherer



**IF YOU ARE EVEN REMOTELY ASSOCIATED WITH AUSTIN'S TECH INDUSTRY, YOU SHOULD KNOW THIS NAME.**

## Wear one

of those white "Hello My Name Is" name tags to a door64.com mixer with the same first name as Matt Genovese and there's a good chance that at least three to six people will want to personally thank you.

After telling door64 mixer attendees that I only share his first name at several of these events, I always hear: "I just wanted to tell him thank you for what he has done for the Austin technology community. Can you introduce me to him?"

In just over a year and without any money spent on marketing, over 2900 users have registered on the door64.com web site. Genovese's online efforts have made a difference for many in Austin's tech community.

As someone who has worked as a public relations professional in the technology sector in San Antonio and now Austin for over a decade, I am amazed at the energy and the vibe found in the three door64 events that I have attended. At the March 27 mixer, I was one of the lucky 250 or so people that got into J. Blacks on the west side of Sixth Street at 5:30 p.m. Within 45 minutes, the Austin fire marshal arrived at the Sixth Street establishment and began to control the overflow of the 150 to 250 people who wanted to join the mixers.

In true Austin Sixth Street fashion, the

crowd of restless technology advocates waiting outside moved the party next door to The Ranch. That bar quickly filled up, allowing people to move from venue to venue. "We poured the event over to the Ranch," Genovese said.

Joining door64.com as a technical publicist wasn't easy for me when I signed on nearly nine months ago. After requesting to join, I got an email from Genovese asking me some questions about my clients and my background.

"I get a lot of requests from realtors, bankers and financial planners who want to join the web site," Genovese said. "Because I restrict membership, the door64 community members are almost virtually assured to find their industry peers on the web site and at our networking events. You won't find a life insurance agent at one of my events."

While the door64 founder has been pleased with the high turnout for his mixers, the web site also focuses on online chats, job placement, job postings and the best calendar listing for technology events in Austin.

"We are not just about networking, although that's a piece of the pie," Genovese said. "We're about community and that's more than a mere web site."

"Communities support each other, and are excited about each others' successes," he added. "When someone finds a new job and posts it on our site, others in the community are there to congratulate them. Other people ask for help and suggestions with finding a job, and both recruiters and tech professionals alike respond. We have a culture—another sign of a community."

Genovese started the web site a year ago. He chose the name door64 in homage to a Commodore 64, his first computer.

"Many of us tech professionals and geeks have come from similar origins, getting our feet wet in programming BASIC on Commodores and Apple IIs," Genovese recalled. "I think those youthful experiences profoundly impacted a generation, and to a degree door64 is serving that same generation, all grown up."

In August, Genovese expanded the door64 efforts with his first High-Tech Career Fair and Networking Night, held at the Monarch Event Center.

"Matt's real passion is to help people get and keep jobs," Kevin Koym, the chief executive officer of Enterprise Teaming and one of Genovese's advisors. "In helping him develop his strategy for the site, I pushed him to just

focus on his one passion – job creation."

"When you're looking for a job, a door64 event helps you stay connected with other technology types," Dan Enberg, an engineering consultant said at the August 7 High-Tech Career Fair. "From time to time, you need to speak to someone you met on line about job opportunities and technology trends. Matt's web site and these mixers help me do that."

Kevin Blanchard, an IT and security professional, was one of the 500 attendees who said he benefitted from attending the career fair. After attending several other local job fairs, Blanchard said Genovese's door64 event reminded him of the ones held in Washington, D.C.

"Typically, I'll walk into a job fair with 10 resumes and walk out with nine of them," Blanchard said about other Austin events. "And, the one resume I give out is usually to the one table that is hiring for anything remotely IT or the recruiter who says 'I think we have an IT department.'"

"Sadly, in the last few months most of the job fairs I have gone to took me longer to drive to than they did to attend," he said. "Most of the booths were hiring for non IT related entry level or retail positions."

"I really hope door64 has more job fairs like this," Blanchard added. "I walked out of this event with no resumes or business cards left."

Genovese said that he designed his career fair in reverse to help people like Blanchard find potential employers.

"Usually career fairs line up employers first, and then invite people to attend," he said. "Instead, I spoke to the door64 members first, and surveyed what they're looking for. Then as they signed up, I went back to employers to inform them of the types of registrants we had so far."

Then the employers signed up with an understanding of the types of professionals who planned to attend. It made more sense that way," he added.

Managing door64's growing array of mixers and the on line site is a part-time gig for Genovese. During the day, the Owego, N.Y., native works for Freescale Semiconductor as a verification engineer. After hours, when his children, Caleb and Emily go to bed, the door64.com founder works in his south Austin home, updating his site and handling the logistics for his next event.

For the August event, Genovese coordinated 22 booths for corporate and technical recruiting specialists. He also worked as the event liaison with Rackspace and LinkedIn, the event's sponsors who paid for the food, complimentary drinks and door prizes.

Genovese takes a hands-on approach to managing each event. With the help of several volunteers, the door64.com founder set up the sign-in booth, hung posters and met the caterer. When the 550 or more attendees at the August event emptied the trays of jalapeno cheese poppers and hot wings, Genovese replaced them with more finger food.

By 9 p.m., when a handful of attendees remained to discuss technology or other business ventures, he was pulling down the signs, disconnecting the audiovisual computer and heading home to another day of work.

"I think one of the reasons that Matt succeeds is his hands on approach to these networking mixers and events," Koym said. "As people get to know Matt, they respect him for

**"I want to help existing niche groups to grow, and foster the creation of new ones."**

the fact that he does all those little details to make it work for them."

Another aspect is cost. Unlike other mixers, there is no charge for attending a door64 event. Working with corporate sponsors, Genovese offsets the costs for the food and drinks. In turn, the corporate sponsors are promoted before and during the event, giving local companies a chance to take center stage among a room full of technology professionals.

While the past door64 events have attracted large groups, Genovese's first networking event held at the Gingerman, a downtown Austin bar, only attracted about 50 to 60 people.

"I was one of the people to come to that mixer," Chris Garrigues. "I am amazed at how quickly they have grown into bigger events."

While door64 events have helped the Austin technology community meet in person, Genovese's effort also has helped the tech community list programs, events and mix-

ers. Log on to the door64.com web site, and there are more than 30 monthly events listed. The site makes it easy to contribute items. After creating an account, anyone that wants to publicize an event can easily list it on the door64.com calendar of events.

"Collaboration among technology groups in Central Texas is very important," said Alisha Ring, president, Austin Technology Council. "Austin Technology Council partners with organizations, such as Door64 to work towards a common goal of connecting people locally to maintain our status as one of the leading technology cities in the nation."

"It upsets me when my user group forgets to lists our programs on door64.com," Nathan Zook said. "It's so easy to list an item on the web site."

"If a small group of people from a given background or expertise want to meet, posting tech-related events on the door64 calendar is a great way to spread the word and find others who are also interested," Genovese said. "I want to help existing niche groups to grow, and foster the creation of new ones."

Buoyed by the success of his events, Genovese said he has further plans to improve both the web site and the programs associated with door64.

"My goal is to develop the web site to enable more on line interaction between members," said Genovese. "I also want the site to become more well-organized and user-friendly. I have some new functionality improvement ideas for door64, which I plan to develop and unveil by the end of the year."

Technology advocates should also expect more mixers but with a focus on a specific industry.

"I want to hold more face-to-face events, even ones that are more focused to a particular discipline in high-tech," Genovese said. "For example, my previous AMCC Networking Night was focused just on chip design folks - it was a great success."

Whatever the event or venue, the buzz today about door64.com among members of the Austin tech community from Blanchard and Zook has helped make Genovese's efforts a success.

"I had been involved in several other networking and IT groups here in Austin and in Washington," Blanchard said. "Prior to attending this event, I had heard only good things about door64." **BD**