Alumnus Entrepreneur Profile:

**Mika Salmi MBA’92D**
CEO and Founder of Atom Entertainment, one of the world’s first online entertainment companies that was sold to Viacom for $200 million in 2006. More recently he was President of Global Digital Media for MTV Networks/Viacom where he helped quadruple its digital revenues.

Mika Salmi is a Finnish-born American entrepreneur specialising in new media. After studying finance and International Business at the University of Wisconsin, he worked for a short time at the Bankers Trust in New York but hated it! During his time there he moonlighted as a disc jockey until he met a music lawyer at a gig who found him a sales job for TVT records. After seven months, however, Mika quit and moved first to Colorado and then Seattle working in various jobs from waiter to real estate agent.

Two years later he studied for his MBA at INSEAD and met an alumnus who was head of Eastern Europe for EMI at the time. He gave Mika the opportunity to work in this rapidly new and developing market. On graduation in 1992 he worked for EMI in Paris as a business planner and as an internal consultant for the CEO who ran France and the Benelux region. He finally left in 1994 to join Sony Music at its New York office. It was during this time he wrote his first business plan for cable channel focused on short-form content.

“When I was in New York I hated the MTV channel but loved the French channel M6 that was relatively new and combined music videos, animation and short films.”

Mika then followed his girlfriend to Seattle and in January 1996 took a position at Real Networks as Director of Business Development for the entertainment business. He worked with artists, labels and radio stations to ensure content placed on the Internet used Real Audio streaming format. In 1997 Real Networks introduced its first video streaming product, RealVideo - it was his involvement in this with a focus on the Internet that led Mika to create Atom Films in 1998. This company specialised in short film distribution.

“Seed funding came from family and friends, but after the initial launch I raised US$700,000 – enough to hire a few staff and open our first offices. In March 1999 we raised a further US$25 million.”

In 2000 Atom Films merged with Macromedia’s Shockwave.com, the Internet’s first casual games company, to form AtomShockwave – later named Atom Entertainment. In 2005 the company acquired Addicting Games making Atom Entertainment the largest casual games company on
the Internet at the time. In 2006 he sold the firm to Viacom for US$200 million.

Most recently Mika was the President of Global Digital Media for MTV Networks/Viacom, where he oversaw more than 1,500 employees in 60 countries and worked across MTVN's many brands, including Comedy Central, Nickelodeon, MTV, and over 30 others. When he joined Viacom, he predicted the trend towards fragmentation online; championed an open approach to media ahead of other major players; and increased Viacom’s presence in the growing area of games - helping Viacom to more than quadruple its digital revenues.

Mika serves on Boards in established and start-up companies in the US, Europe, and Japan. Current and past boards have included innovators in technology and clean energy such as Sulake/Habbo (Helsinki) where he is Chairman of the Board, ImageMetrics (Los Angeles), Shockwave KK (Japan), Blinkbox (London), Songbird (San Francisco), Inkd (Seattle), and Propel Biofuels (Seattle). Salmi is also a voting member of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and serves on the steering committee for INSEAD.

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