

Beyond Biotech

Local CEO sees startup culture alive and thriving in San Diego

PHOTO BY BOB STEFANKO



Prior to launching Branded Research, Gaffney worked in the early phases of Web-based application development before the app revolution began in the Santa Monica region now dubbed “Silicon Beach” for its participation in the tech startup scene. When he started thinking about leaving the LA traffic behind, he steered his eyes — and his career path — toward San Diego.

“When you get down here, you hit the brakes. It took some getting used to,” says Gaffney. “At first I thought it could have a negative impact on productivity, but now I disagree with that first assessment.” He goes on to explain that no matter where you work, the work itself can become so engrossing, so “it’s nice to be in an environment where people are enjoying the work-life balance.” He recognizes that a huge segment of the workforce — millennials — are embracing this new focus on balance, saying the generation

has “a newfound respect for quality of life, which is refreshing.” This means opportunity is no longer limited to a few specific areas. “You can find startup niches everywhere, and there’s good talent in a lot of places,” says Gaffney. This bodes well for San Diego business growth; people want to live and work *here*. “There is a burgeoning tech culture all over the county, from Carlsbad to Encinitas, and downtown,” Gaffney observes. There’s just one thing missing that he believes will solidify San Diego’s position on the proverbial map: a catchy name, like “Silicon Valley” or “Silicon Beach.” “I think the last piece of the puzzle is having something to hang onto so you can brand it in some way,” he says.

With Branded Research firmly planted in San Diego for the long term, Gaffney is pouring his efforts into its continued vitality in the market research segment, and is looking to add a local philanthropic focus within the company to further solidify its relationship with the community. 619.309.1900, brinc.co DEANNA MURPHY

WITH A GROWING NUMBER of companies choosing San Diego for their headquarters, in categories expanding beyond biotech and now ranging from specialty foods to tech to fashion, the startup environment continues to bolster itself and the businesses that call this area home. “I’m very bullish on San Diego,” says Matt Gaffney, co-founder and CEO of downtown San Diego-based Branded Research, Inc. The third-party market research company delivers highly vetted demographic segments for queries and surveys to inform their clients’ marketing decisions through a unique activation of its Facebook online panel, MintVine. Officially launched in 2012, Branded Research has already experienced rapid growth; its revolutionary use of the social medium has drawn the young company a number of heavyweight brands to its client portfolio. It counts Nielsen, Toluna, and Harris among its partners helping to serve clients.