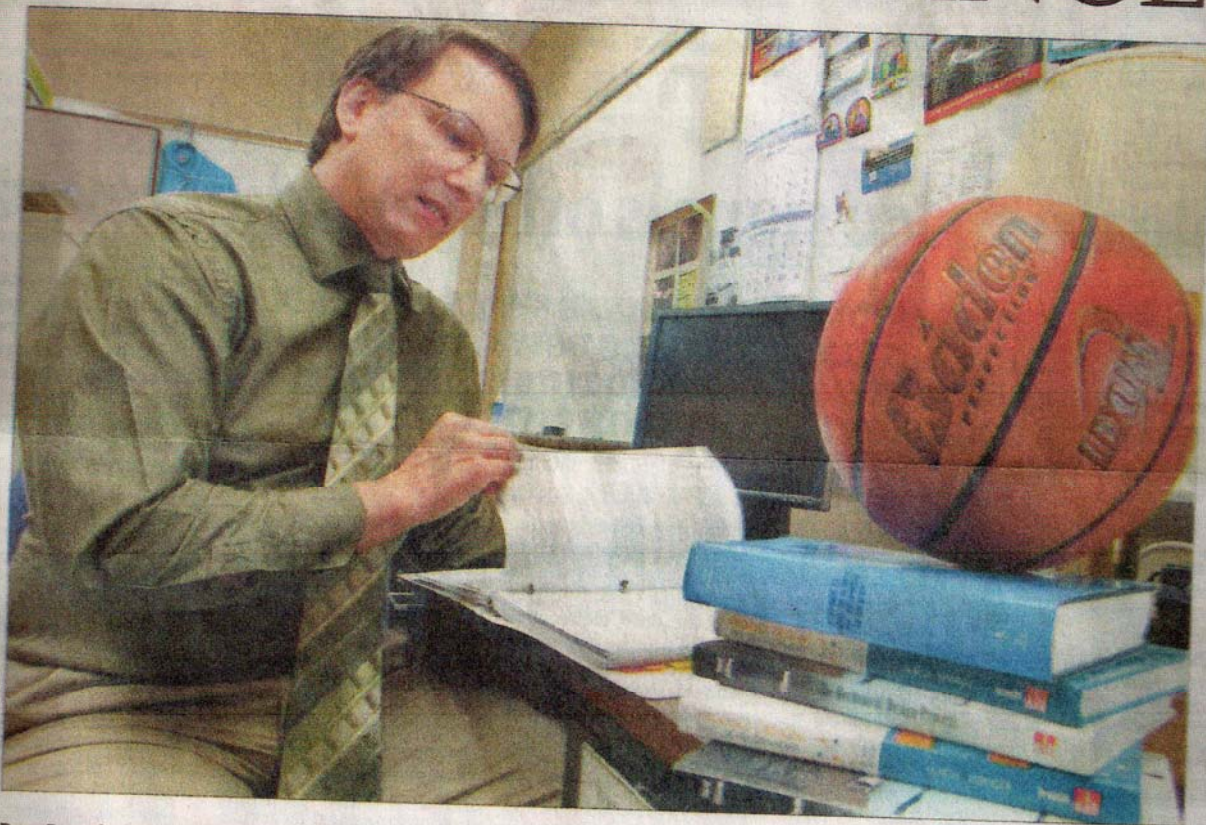


TOP PERFORMANCE



Perry Parendo, founder of the consulting firm Perry's Solutions, also teaches at the University of St. Thomas — and coaches basketball on the side. MARLIN LEVISON • mlevison@startribune.com

Consultant Perry Parendo works to help others improve their performance, from product design to athletic skills.

By TODD NELSON • Special to the Star Tribune

small business

Improving team performance — whether that of engineers designing medical devices or middle schoolers playing basketball — is the goal of Perry Parendo and Perry's Solutions, his Stillwater consulting firm.

The company offers new product development and project management and training services. It also can assemble a temporary development team from his network.

Parendo says coaching teams to achieve better results in corporate research and development and on the hardwood have more in common than one might think.

That's something Parendo, who has a mechanical engineering degree from the University of Minnesota, discovered after close to two decades in corporate prod-

uct development and project management, and more than a decade as a volunteer basketball coach, including working summer camps for the U's Tubby Smith, at Gustavus Adolphus College and the prominent Snow Valley Iowa Basketball School.

Parendo went full time with Perry's Solutions in 2006, six years after he started consulting as a sideline. He previously worked as a project manager at medical device makers Guidant and Medtronic and also has experience in the automotive, aerospace instrumentation and defense armament technology industries.

The former high school basketball play-

Parendo continues on D8 ►

PERRY'S SOLUTIONS

Business: Consulting company offers new product design, program management and training services specializing in using Design of Experiments software to improve products and solve problems for medical device companies and other manufacturers.

Founded: 2000; went full time in 2006

Headquarters: Stillwater

Website: www.perrysolutions.com

Employees: One

Executive: Perry Parendo, president

2010 revenue: \$100,000

Strategy: Expand network and consulting opportunities through work with the Minnesota Council for Quality. Also, pursue training work in Singapore and other international projects while maintaining local focus.

TOP PERFORMANCE

◀ PAREDO FROM D1

er got into coaching when his oldest son, now 20, started playing basketball in kindergarten, and Parendo thought he could do a better job. He hopes his summer camp work will lead to an assistant coaching position this season with a high school team in the metro area.

"I started finding that my coaching and my project management lessons were the same," Parendo said. "Whether it's teaching technical, statistical stuff or teaching basketball skills, there's still a progression to your teaching that's important. Engineering and coaching, you can't separate them, they just blend together."

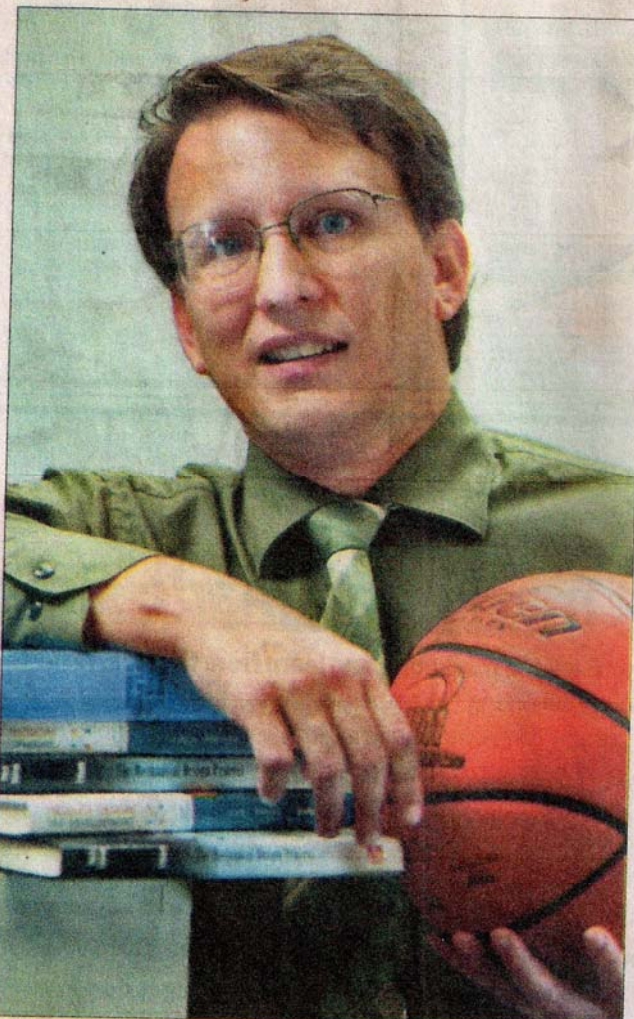
In addition to his work and coaching, Parendo has been teaching as an adjunct faculty member at the University of St. Thomas' School of Engineering for 16 years. He teaches a graduate class, typically working engineers with 10 years or more of experience, in Design of Experiments (DOE), which he described as a "statistically based, software-driven tool to assist in the process of understanding a system."

Stat-Ease, the Minneapolis company whose DOE software Parendo uses, says employing DOE can help companies improve product quality, develop efficient processes, quickly solve manufacturing problems and "make breakthrough discoveries by applying powerful statistical methods."

It can apply to subjects ranging from product design to manufacturing process to marketing, Parendo said.

In class, Parendo requires students to use DOE to work on a project, often a problematic one, from their workplace. Over the years, Parendo calculates that students' efforts on some 185 projects have saved their companies more than \$7.5 million. Those results attracted companies' attention, and they began seeking him out for consulting work, which eventually led him to launch Perry's Solutions.

While his focus is on working with local companies, he expects to travel to Singapore next month to do DOE training. Through Skype, he's already worked on projects in Russia and Italy and another in Vietnam. He joined the nonprofit Minnesota Council for Quality last year



MARLIN LEVISON • mlevison@startribune.com

Perry Parendo in his University of St. Thomas office. He has taught at the School of Engineering there for 16 years, teaching a graduate class in Design of Experiments, a software-driven tool.

and is completing training to be an examiner for its quality award program, work that will expand networking opportunities for his consulting services. He also hopes to work with the council to meet the needs of small businesses, which he said make up roughly half its membership.

Parendo finished 2010 with \$100,000 in revenue, which he said is in the ballpark for a working engineer. "People have told me you can do what you do and make \$500,000 but, balancing it with coaching,

atories, the Eden Prairie-based medical device company where Shamla is director of quality. Parendo's extensive experience in project management and product design helps him communicate effectively with fellow engineers.

"He offers very technical training and can also walk through the business implications," Shamla said. "When it comes to solutions, education and training engineers quickly, it's good to have resources like Perry."

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small business calendar

TUESDAY, OCT. 11

MARKETING STRATEGIES AND IDEAS: Preregistration required. 6:30 p.m. \$29. Falcon Ridge Middle School, 12900 Johnny Cake Ridge Rd., Apple Valley. 651-423-7920.

THURSDAY, OCT. 13

SCORE FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR BUSINESS, "QUICK-BOOKS BASICS": This seminar discusses the importance of a good accounting system and how to set it up. Preregistration required. 9 a.m. \$59. Amherst Wilder Foundation, 451 N. Lexington Pkwy., St. Paul. 651-261-1429.

When submitting items for this calendar, include title, time, date, location, fee, sponsor, contact telephone number and description. E-mail to SmallBiz@startribune.com.

which takes a lot of time, it's not going to be that," Parendo said.

Shannon Witkowski, senior quality engineer at Synovis Micro Companies Alliance's surgical innovations office in St. Paul, said the company has brought Parendo in on several occasions to help with complicated statistical testing and to help research optimization of a manufacturing process.

"He doesn't have just one canned way of doing things," Witkowski said. "He looks at your goal, your budget, your schedule and comes up with options that would work well. It's a very cost-effective approach."

Gerald Shamla, a former student of Parendo's at St. Thomas, has had him do DOE training at Starkey Lab-

The expert says: Ron Bennett, associate professor and founding dean of the School of Engineering at the University of St. Thomas, brought Parendo in as an adjunct faculty member to teach DOE to graduate students in 1996.

"His course has continued to improve with time," Bennett said, in part because Parendo, who has received high marks on student evaluations, uses that feedback to fine-tune the course. "He practices what he teaches. He isn't just teaching students DOE, which is a way to zero in on best practices, he would use that technique on himself for improving his teaching."

Todd Nelson is a freelance writer in Woodbury. His e-mail address is todd_nelson@mac.com.