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March 27, 2013

Peter Tassiopoulos is the tech equivalent of a hired gun. He's the guy you bring in to turn your promising software start-up into a profitable business.

That's just what Mississauga-based **Sphere 3D Corp.** (TSXV: [ANY](#)) wanted when it hired Tassiopoulos to be its new chief executive earlier this month.

"When their technology was ready for commercialization they reached out to me and asked me if I'd lead the charge," said Tassiopoulos, an original shareholder and close friend of company founder and former CEO **Mario Biasini**.

Tassiopoulos, who generally doesn't stick around any job longer than two years, said his "sweet spot" is in growing technology businesses to achieve between \$10-20 million in annual revenues.

Sphere has developed a cloud-based offering that lets consumers use any software, such as Microsoft Word, on any device. As an example, Tassiopoulos said the company's Glassware 2.0 product lets Apple iPad users browse websites that run Flash.

"You've got access to these productivity tools on your device that are not actually compatible with your device," he said, adding the technology essentially converts popular software programs into apps that you can use on your mobile and desktop devices.

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In December, Sphere became publicly listed and briefly offered its "SurftoGo" app on iTunes, that lets iPad users use a version of the faster FireFox browser and allows them access to plugins like Flash, PDF and QuickTime.

The technology offers business clients the ability to seamlessly integrate their employees' smartphones and tablet computers without having to buy tons of additional software.

"On the enterprise side you're already acquiring all your enterprise licenses, so we're just a technology that enables bring your own device," said Tassiopoulos.

Sphere, headquartered on Matheson Blvd in central Mississauga, was launched in 2009 and has raised about \$5.5 million from Toronto and Calgary-based private equity firm **Jennings Capital**.

In the last six months the company has doubled its staff to 16 and Tassiopoulos said he expects that number to reach 30 by the end of the year.

"The company has an opportunity to grow exponentially in the next 24 months," he said, adding it would likely get to a stage where it would outgrow his skill set. "Usually I leave once they're in the expansion phase of the business cycle."

Tassiopoulos first made his mark building his own healthcare IT firm, **Igeacare Systems Inc**, into a \$15-million enterprise that grew from four employees to 120 in just four years.

"It's where I cut my teeth on the IT side," he said. "We built a very large distribution channel with the likes of **Nortel, Avaya, Mittel, Dell, France Telecom** and **Bell Canada**."

Before coming to Sphere, Tassiopoulos worked as the chief operating officer for Brantford-based **Biosign Technologies Inc**. (TSXV: BIO), a medical device company that makes home blood-pressure monitors.

During that time the 45-year-old developed his own heart condition, which forced him to resign. Since that scare, Tassiopoulos has given up smoking, caffeine and dropped 50 pounds and says he is in the best shape of his life.

Now the father of six, including a one-year-old, is hoping to oversee a similar transformation in Sphere.

"As a shareholder in the company the sooner the better for all of us."

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