

Motor City adman: Dietz starts own marketing shop after 17 years with Ilitch



- **Name:** Michael Dietz
- **Age:** 43
- **New title:** President and director, Dietz Trot Sports and Entertainment
- **Previous job:** Vice president of sales and marketing, Detroit Tigers, Ilitch Holdings Inc.
- **First job:** Laborer for Pulte Homes
- **Education:** Bachelor of Science, business administration (1983), Western Michigan University, J.D. (1987), Thomas Cooley Law School
- **Resides:** Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
- **Grew up:** Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
- **Executives most admired:** Michael and Marian Ilitch, owners of Little Caesars, Detroit Tigers, Red Wings, and Olympia Entertainment
- **Favorite vacation spot:** Cabo San Lucas, Mexico
- **Last book read:** "The Five People You Meet in Heaven" by Mitch Albom
- **Last movie seen:** "Shrek 2"
- **Favorite movie:** "Jerry Maguire"
- **Favorite music:** Fleetwood Mac, Bruce Springsteen, Sheryl Crow
- **Typical hours worked in a week:** 50

BY JESSIE LEWIS
SNEF WRITER

Mike Dietz left Ilitch Holdings Inc. after 17 years to fulfill a lifelong dream: opening his own management firm.
Dietz recently partnered with David Trot of the Trot

and Trot law firm to form Dietz Trot Sports and Entertainment. The company now has five employees and concentrates on sports and entertainment marketing, naming rights and sponsorships, contract negotiations and hospitality and event management.

Dietz is responsible for day-to-day operations, including business development, client contract negotiations and strategic planning.

■ **What's the biggest challenge in your new position?**

Having overall responsibility for all aspects of the business. I've always been into marketing but now I have to handle other things like accounting and administration as well. It's also hard to say no to potential new business. Sometimes clients want us to work with them, but the business that they need from us doesn't fit with the objectives of the company. It's hard when you start a new business to say no because you feel like you should take on any business that comes your way.

■ **What is the biggest risk you've ever taken?**

Leaving the secure career that I had with the Detroit Tigers and Red Wings to start my own business.

■ **What is your biggest professional accomplishment?**

The overall growth of Ditch Holdings during my 17 years with the company. I'll give you a few examples. When I began there were about 1,000 Little Caesars, and when I left there were over 4,000. In addition to the Little Caesars' growing, other accomplishments were the branding of Hockeytown and the reopening

of the Fox Theatre.

■ **What is your biggest professional disappointment?**

I don't know that I've personally had any professional disappointments, but one thing that comes to my mind as a disappointment was the Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding incident. Kerrigan's knee was struck at Cobo Arena, in Detroit. I was the director of marketing for the arena at the time and I will always remember how disappointed I was that it occurred in Detroit. Although we had no control over that happening, it was a bad time when Detroit was receiving so much press attention for that to have occurred.

■ **What is your career advice?**

I would tell other people to volunteer as much as possible. In the sports industry, people typically work a lot of hours, and it can be hard to do. But if you volunteer, whether it's through a nonprofit organization or within the company, you can learn so much and feel good about yourself.

■ **What one element would you like to change about the sports industry?**

I'd like to see entry-level employees make more money. I've seen talented people working in the industry have to leave their jobs because they couldn't hold out for a salary increase. I am not talking about a pay raise after two years of working for a company, but referring to people who have waited for advancements for seven years and no positions opening up.