Navigating the Entrepreneurial Roller Coaster

It’s safe to say that the entrepreneurial journey is not for the faint of heart — a staggering 66 percent of small businesses fail due to the internal and emotional factors. In this talk, Phil Dumas, Founder and CEO of UniKey Technologies, will shine a candid light on navigating the entrepreneurial rollercoaster. Phil will be giving a real-world account of his startup journey, including his incredible highs and lows, and dive into specific examples and strategies for how to deal with the wild ride of entrepreneurship.

An engineer by degree and entrepreneur by practice, Phil has played key roles in several startup and large companies. Most recently, Phil founded UniKey Technologies, a phone-as-a-key company focused on enabling people to move freely and securely through the world’s doors with ultimate control, convenience and peace of mind. He has a passion for, and has been working on, alternative access control solutions for more than a decade. With extensive product development, large customer management, turn-around and M&A experience, Phil has been able to wear the multiple hats required to disrupt the access control space. He is also known for his successful appearance on ABC’s Shark Tank, becoming the first company to get an offer from all five sharks.

Fine Tuning Materials’ Band Structure: From Energy Storage to Neuromorphic Optoelectronic Devices

As the global appetite for clean energy is growing like never before, energy storage devices like hybrid supercapacitors are attracting considerable attention. In this presentation, Dr. Thomas will discuss how the electrode work function is tuned to design an aqueous electrolyte-based supercapacitor useful for developing energy storing structural components of EVs. He will also demonstrate the development of a highly photosensitive superstructure platform that can provide photonic memory, which is beneficial for developing an optoelectronic synapse.

Dr. Thomas’ research interests include structural energy storage devices, solar cells, optoelectronic synapses and OECTs. His research has been funded by the NSF, the DoD, NASA-FSRC and a few companies. He has published more than 130 articles, holds 12 patents (issued/pending) and is a co-founder of two companies. He is a recipient of the R&D 100 award, the NSF CAREER award, the Veeco award for nanotechnology innovations, the UCF Excellence in Research Award and the UCF Reach for the Stars award. He received a Ph.D. in optical materials from Cochin University before joining the College of Optical Sciences at the University of Arizona as a research scientist in 2001.