

## PLUGGED IN



JASON DOY

## Michael Esquivel

### Fenwick & West partner

Esquivel specializes in digital health and consumer tech. He serves as pro bono counsel to Rock Health, a digital health incubator turned full-service seed-stage fund, and organized Fenwick's 2013 Digital Health Investor Summit. He graduated from Columbia Law School. A former general counsel, Esquivel blogs and tweets about life sciences legal issues.

**How'd you end up in this job?** I've always had an entrepreneurial impulse. My family runs a small food production company down in L.A., and I've watched them grow the business since I was a kid. I wanted to work with entrepreneurs, I just knew it from a young age.

**How did you go about focusing your practice on digital health clients?** Like many things in life it was good timing and good fortune. I met [Rock Health] cofounder and CEO, Halle Tecco, and it was at that time I was beginning to get excited about the potential to disrupt that \$2.8 trillion a year sector. That helped catalyze and gave me even more enthusiasm about getting immersed in this sector. I think it was just a natural opportunity to bridge that Facebook, GoPro consumer tech focus by taking those engagement ideas and bringing them to health and making people think that engagement with their health is cool. There is so much synergy with what I was doing before. These companies are more like Facebook, Dropbox and Twitter then they are like pharma and med device companies because of that consumer engagement angle.

**Have there been challenges?** One of the risks I took in my career was addressing that issue of being pigeon-holed. Sometimes industries and waves of technologies come and go. And there's a natural tension of wanting to be seen as everything to everyone against establishing a depth of expertise.

**What career accomplishment you are most proud of?** Both my mom and dad attended some college, but they never graduated, so I was the first one in my family to graduate from college and then go to law school. Then becoming partner here, putting on the digital health investor summit ... Working on GoPro and Facebook—I'm really proud of that.

**Advice you'd give new lawyers?** Invest in yourself. Realize it's a marathon, not a sprint. Take advantage of going to all the corporate educational programs or litigation trainings. There is a tendency when you're a young lawyer to focus on billable hours.

**What would you do if you weren't doing this?** I would be working with my brother to help scale our family business. Or probably taking a swing at a start-up.

**Guilty pleasure?** If I could sneak away, I'd love to sit on the beach and do nothing. A fruity drink in hand, a nice, beautiful ocean in front of me and read a good book.

**Workplace pet peeve?** I get the privilege to go and visit a lot of my clients at their offices. I'd have to say Bay Area traffic is my pet peeve.

**Favorite part about working with emerging and high-growth companies?** The entrepreneurs. Their passion gets me fired up.

**What's changing most rapidly in your field?** We are shifting from a fee-for-system—where a health-care provider gets paid for running tests, performing procedures, doing something to or with you—to a fee for outcome model. Now it's how do we keep a patient healthy. We're going to see an enormous transformation over the next two, three, five, 10 years as a result of that move. The opportunities are just huge.

**What's the most pressing issue for law firms today?** The whole legal industry is asking itself what are you going to be? Are you trying to be everything to everybody, or are you, like Fenwick & West, going to be focused and be a mile deep in understanding the unique issues that technology and emerging growth companies encounter.

— *Nathalie Pierrepont*

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