
Man of Action

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“There’s a grit to people who go to work early in life,” says Doug Fiefia, “I grew up seeing my parents put everything on the line, juggling several jobs to create better opportunities for their kids. Because of their sacrifices, I don’t sit back and wait for opportunities to come to me. I go out and get them.”

Doug’s parents emigrated to the United States from Tonga in the 1970s and later raised him and his four older siblings in the suburbs of Salt Lake City, Utah. For years, they lived in a modest single-family home with many other families. By age seven, Doug was riding along with his dad to construction sites and pitching in where he could. That gave him a strong sense of gratitude and a deep understanding that everything he received had been obtained through hard work.



“Anyone can read about leadership, work ethic and customer service. But when I went to work with my dad, I experienced it,” he says. “I learned what it was like to meet deadlines. I saw what it meant to make less money so you can pay your employees more. I witnessed him doing the right thing for even customers who were in the wrong. Those early life lessons helped me become the leader I am today.”

The interpersonal skills he developed as a child made Doug a natural fit for student government in middle school, high school and at Utah State University, where he was elected student body president two years in a row. While in college

he married his incredibly supportive wife, with whom he now has three beloved daughters. He graduated from USU with bachelor's degrees in both business administration and marketing in 2015.

Doug worked in corporate sales at Workday before he and his family headed to Houston, Texas so he could pursue a master's in business administration (MBA) at the Jones Graduate School of Business at Rice University. Right away he saw opportunities to do more than just study business.

"I have a hard time seeing areas that could improve and not doing something about it. At one point I was basically doing what the president of the Jones Student Association would do. So everyone said I should be the next president," said Doug. Soon his fellow students elected him to that role.

Doug brought a strong sense of family and culture to the school. Among many other meaningful initiatives, he paired each international student with an American family so they could experience the Thanksgiving tradition. He also developed the Owl Voice tool that now ensures students' voices can be heard by school administration.

He earned his MBA in 2020 and teamed up with his father, his hero, to start a construction company. Doug was also recruited as a manager of Google Customer Solutions, a role he now enjoys while remaining strategically involved in the business with his dad.

"We each have so much potential. But many of us don't realize the impact we can make or the change we can create by speaking up and putting in the work to make things happen," says Doug. At the rate he's leading by example, others are sure to follow.