



35 MICHAEL BASSIRPOUR

President, CEO, Partner • GLR Advanced Recycling, Roseville • Employees: 150
Revenue: \$70M • Michigan State University

IN THE COMING MONTHS, MICHAEL

Bassirpour, president, CEO, and a partner in GLR Advanced Recycling in Roseville, plans to grow the scrap metal business to seven locations, up from five facilities today. The company's expansion into Illinois and Indiana will lead to the addition of 50 to 60 employees.

"We buy over 40,000 cars a year for scrap, and typically they're 2004 vehicles and older," says Bassirpour, who is joined in the business by Sandy Rosen, Ilene Bischer, and Ben Rosen. In addition, Mad Dog Technology in downtown Birmingham, co-founded by Peter Karmanos Jr., former chairman and CEO of Compuware Corp., recently acquired an equity stake in a related company, *TheScrapPost.com*.

The latter business is a digital portal that pairs buyers and sellers of copper, aluminum, iron ore, and other commodities. The online network allows users to access or move inventory much more quickly than they ever could by depending on the daily fax report once commonly used in the industry.

With the two new scrapyards, Bassirpour says GLR will be able to process upward of 70,000 cars a year. The company's main recycling facility is in Livonia, and it has what are called feeder yards in Roseville, Ann Arbor, and Port Huron. It also operates an electronics recycling facility in Oak Park, and has locations in Northville Township, Flint, and New York that can handle metals and used paper, cardboard, and plastics.

"I would say 98 percent of my time is spent running GLR," Bassirpour says, "but *TheScrapPost.com* has been growing rapidly. It's an online trading, brokerage, and subscription-based platform that's generating sales north of \$12 million (annually). That's up from \$980,000 (in 2015).

"As for GLR, we're kind of on the tarmac and getting ready to take off. We're hungry and aggressive, and we're growing. We can grow by acquisitions or startups, whatever makes sense. But it's not growth just to grow; rather, it's growth through necessity. We're just getting warmed up." — *R.J. King*



37 PHIL BRABBS

Co-Founder • Torrent Consulting, Ann Arbor
Employees: 75 • Revenue: \$6.7M • University of Michigan

WHEN IT CAME TIME TO DECIDE

between settling for a life in corporate America or taking a chance and starting a business with his best friend, Phil Brabbs made the risky choice of trying something new. "Looking back, it wasn't much of a decision," he says. "I had to do it."

The road hasn't always been smooth for Brabbs, who college football fans may remember as the place kicker who made the game-winning field goal to propel the University of Michigan Wolverines past the Washington Huskies in 2002.

But after that high came a low period, as Brabbs was diagnosed with the blood cancer multiple myeloma at 28 (the average age of diagnosis is 68). Not one to shirk from adversity, Brabbs says he was up for the fight. "My mantra is 'dominate life,'" he says. "For me, it's just too difficult to sit back."

Multiple myeloma is incurable, but nine years after being diagnosed, Brabbs says he's feeling great.

The technology firm he and his friend started, Torrent Consulting in Ann Arbor, is stronger than ever, too. After posting revenue of \$1.6 million in 2014 and \$2.1 million in 2015, Torrent saw a huge jump to \$6.7 million in sales in 2016. "Our goal was always to grow," Brabbs says, "but we wanted to do it with purpose."

Brabbs points out that while Torrent is successful in terms of revenue, one of the company's core values is service. In fact, Torrent — which Brabbs co-founded with Daniel McCollum — recently opened an office in Guatemala, in hopes of showcasing the talents of local workers while at the same time bolstering technology in the emerging country and helping to lift people out of poverty.

"We aren't looking to make our mark as heroes," he says. "We're just trying to help. That's our dream, and we're getting to live it."

Brabbs doesn't know what the future holds, but he's optimistic. "Things are going great for now," he says. "Right now it's all about motivating people to dominate life." — *Mike Larson*