Thompson, David Encyclopedia Article

Thompson, David

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Thompson, David

American Aeronautics Company Executive 1954-

David Thompson, CEO of Orbital Sciences Corporation, cofounded his company with the vision of commercial companies forming the driving force in the space industry, instead of government agencies.

David W. Thompson is the chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of Orbital Sciences Corporation (OSC), a space technology and satellite services company he cofounded in 1982. Before starting OSC, Thompson was a project manager and engineer who worked on advanced rocket engines at the National Aeronautic and Space Administration's (NASA) Marshall Space Flight Center.

As a graduate student, Thompson worked on the first Mars landing missions at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Thompson and his cofounders of OSC met at Harvard Business School, where they shared an interest in the commercial uses of space. OSC was founded on the concept of commercial companies, not government agencies, being the driving force in the space industry. Whereas most established space companies' commercial businesses have evolved from government-or military-funded programs, OSC is devoted exclusively to the commercial aspects of the space industry.

OSC is one of the world's ten largest space-related companies, with over 5,000 employees. The company has its headquarters in Dulles, Virginia, and maintains major facilities in the United States, Canada, and several locations overseas. OSC's business activities involve satellites, the Pegasus and Taurus launch vehicles, space robotics, and software. In addition, OSC provides mobile data and messaging services (ORBCOMM) and satellite imaging of Earth.

See Also

Launch Vehicles, Expendable (Volume 1);; Launch Vehicles, Reusable (Volume 1);; Remote Sensing Systems (Volume 1);; Reusable Launch Vehicles (Volume 4);; Satellites, Types of (Volume 1).

Internet Resources

Orbital Sciences Web Site. <http://www.orbital.com/OSC/inde x.html>.