



What's your philosophy on maintaining a focus on innovation?

Maintaining a focus on innovation requires leveraging technology to do new things that couldn't be done before. Making sure your team understands that is critical. Porting software from DOS to Windows and from Windows to the Cloud requires no new innovation. While some basic functionality maybe ported, the more innovative approach is taking the manual process that exists today and moving it to an automated process.

The Cloud has provided a whole new platform for innovation. The sharing of data and services between customers and partners creates lots of opportunities to automate processes by using technology in ways that it has never been used before. Innovation in the cloud is not about using the latest technology but instead it is about how a specific technology can vastly improve the day to day processes that we all have. You can't deliver on innovation without a focus on customers, how they operate today and how to provide that leap forward that will transform their lives.

What do you do as CEO to keep your organization focused on customers and value?

I start with the basics. First we have an open environment where all the employees sit in a bullpen with no cubicles or offices. This allows information to flow from sales and customer service to marketing, product management and engineering. That constant energy between groups is where we see lots of collaboration focused around real customer pain points. In addition, we surround all the employees with customer testimonials and our core values painted on the walls. There is no escaping what we are focused on.

Great product management always starts with the customer. Whether it is a one on one conversation, a focus group or quantitative survey, the lessons learned are invaluable. Each of these is part of the fabric of how we do things. At a minimum, we screen for it when we hire and then we all lead by example; talking to customers and prospects whenever we can. Ultimately, when we are discussing strategies or product roadmaps, I always ask what does the customer

think? As a result, employees understand our expectations and reflect this in their day to day work.

Finally, we offer stellar support. We love talking to customers via phone, chat and email. We build it into the application itself to encourage interaction with the customer and then we track customer satisfaction on every interaction. These numbers are reported weekly and monthly for all to see. Annually, we conduct a Net Promoter Survey where we take the data and use it to celebrate successes and evaluate areas of improvement with employees. I believe this is why we have an industry leading Net Promoter score in the mid 60's.

This type of focus and innovation leads customers to say that they save 50 - 75% of the time it takes to manage the back office while getting paid 2 - 3 times faster.

In 2020, looking back on this decade, what will be the single most impactful technical advancement driving business growth?

I can remember hearing of the information economy as a kid and yet I think this will be the first decade where that phrase means something to everyone. At the core of the information revolution is the Cloud. At the core of the Cloud is **Shared Data** and it changes everything. It creates transparency across and between users and developers.

We have had central data before but the data was not shared. You only have to look at Facebook to see that people value transparency and are willing to give up some privacy to have better relationships and services. Extending the **Shared Data** concept to the business world will allow businesses to grow faster. It improves collaboration with their employees, their accountants, their customers and their suppliers, all in real time and accessible from anywhere. Being able to securely share payment information and documents between interested parties accelerates business transactions and overall growth. What is most exciting to me is that the applications of **Shared Data** have only just begun. By 2020, businesses and the world at large will be connected and doing things we never imagined.

This interview was published in [SIIA's Vision from the Top](#) , a Software Division publication released at [All About the Cloud](#)

2012