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InterImage Propels Customers Forward



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“Modernization projects significantly impact the ability of our customers to perform their work and we value the opportunity to make a difference, to have positive impact, for our customers. Our analysts, architects and programmers love that kind of work.” Leslie Steele

CEOCFO: *Ms. Steele, the first thing I see on the InterImage, Inc site is, “Delivering tomorrow today.” What does that mean at InterImage? What are you doing and how are you doing it?*

Ms. Steele: InterImage focuses on the application development and systems integration, creating modernized solutions for our customers. We work with our customers from the up-front process of understanding and documenting their business processes, to identifying how to improve and streamline those processes, to architecting a solution, to developing and implementing that solution. We seek to apply the latest technologies to enable our customers with solutions to accomplish their mission in the most efficient and effective way.

InterImage applies a forward-looking perspective when we work with our customers, helping to bring them into the future, so that they can more efficiently and effectively perform their jobs and accomplish their organization’s mission in the best way possible.

CEOCFO: *How do you help your customers crystallize what they are trying to accomplish? What might you ask them and what might you look at about how they are working that less knowledgeable companies do not take into account?*

Ms. Steele: It’s a process of extracting bits of information and then putting those pieces together to form a complete picture, like a puzzle. We typically work with multiple people at varying levels in the organization. In enterprise systems, people perform different aspects of a larger business process; they are experts in a part, and may understand other parts, but may not know the nuances of other slices. The solution needs to reflect and support the whole picture, the whole puzzle. To design an effective solution, we need to understand both the pieces and their nuances as well as how they come together to make a whole process. Next, we create a visual picture, because people are

visual creatures by and large. Those visual pictures help our customers understand how the system will behave at a component and holistic level, confirming we are on the same page to prevent subsequent re-work.

CEOCFO: *Do you find that people are forthcoming? Do people typically feel free to speak about what it is or is there some trepidation that maybe the "higher ups" will not be so happy if they share too much information of if they seem to be complaining?*

Ms. Steele: Generally, we find people are forthcoming with information. We give them a safe space to talk and express things that they are unhappy about, and we make sure they know they will not be singled out. In fact, one of the dangers is talking to someone who is so forthcoming, they seem to be an expert on more than you might expect. It's important to guard against misinformation. We do this by capturing input from multiple people. A second danger is the missing piece; a component of the process or business rules that is overlooked. It is difficult for most people to describe system interactions. It's another reason why it is important to talk to multiple people at multiple levels, so we can ferret out, "what is that missing puzzle piece that no one talks about, that has to exist in some capacity."

CEOCFO: *Would you give us a couple of examples of your engagements - what you are asked to do and how you craft a solution?*

Ms. Steele: In one example our customer had an older, outdated case management system. The older technologies were no longer supported. At first, they thought, "We are going to rip and replace, no change in process". As we started talking to them about that it became clear there were embedded business rules that no one really understood. We could identify those by reverse engineering the code, but you want to understand the rationale behind those rules and whether they are still relevant. The more questions we asked, the more it became apparent the business process and underlying rules in the system were not reflective of the business need. With the customer's blessing, we began to work directly with users to re-imagine the business process, making sure that the current set of assumptions and rules under which they operate were appropriately reflected in the modernized solution. We revamped the process and re-architected the solution. The end result is a modernized business workflow that more accurately fits the mission and what the users do every day with a modernized software support system that's less costly to maintain.

CEOCFO: *How do you help a company overcome some of the trepidation in making a change?*

Ms. Steele: It is a real thing! People do get nervous. One of the things we do early on in an engagement is to start identifying where those negative and nervous voices are coming from, who are the people who are going to be negative about implementing a change and could potentially derail a project. We want to find those people and then work with them very directly to make them feel more comfortable and recognize that they are going to gain from the change.

In some cases, people may feel like, "Yes, I have a lot of mundane, tedious work that I have to do manually, outside of the bounds of the system, and when you create a new system that will be automated. You are taking away my job and I am scared of what is going to happen!" That kind of employee may throw out a lot of obstacles, perhaps not, "I am going to lose my job," but in some other capacity, to throw you off track and attempt to derail the project.

We seek to understand their motivations and identify how they directly benefit. For example, "You will not have those routine tasks, but you are going to get the opportunity to do this other work that you do not get to spend much time on now, because you have to do that time-consuming routine work." We seek to make users feel empowered, help them see they are winning in the bargain.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the Robotic Process Automation services you provide? Are people taking advantage of that?*

Ms. Steele: Yes. RPA, Robotic Process Automation, is in many respects transformative. We code these software robots; "bots", to perform any function that a person interacting with a keyboard can perform. If you think about your job, there are probably some routine things that you do that take valuable time, time that could be more productively spent in other activities. We all have these rote functions in varying degrees in our jobs; routine interactions that we do on the computer. Bots can be quickly programmed to perform these. Depending on the process, it can take a couple of days to a few weeks for a more complex process to code the bot.

When you talk about, for example, a function or operation where you may have a number of people doing the same repetitive process, you can use bots to automate these routine processes. For example, there are a lot of routine activities associated with accounting, contract administration, human resource administration, reporting kinds of activities. In many cases, users extract data from systems, put that on spreadsheets to manipulate and report data in the way they need. These are routine interactions that can easily be performed by a bot. Even if the interactions happen only once a week or once a month, it may still be more cost effective to use bots.

Once you automate a process with a bot, the bot performs the steps typically in matter of seconds or minutes, verses what may take a person hours or days. Bots can run 24 hours a day and they never make a mistake. They do not get tired. They do not transpose numbers. The information output is 100% accurate – of course, assuming the data source is accurate which is not always the case. But then bots can be programmed to look for anomalies in source data. Without question, bots are transformative. Already, government agencies have saved thousands of man-hours and millions of dollars and the journey is just beginning. Agencies are in different points in the journey; many are just now dipping their toe in the water. But some are further along and are taking real advantage of the power of this technology. Beyond the automating of rote tasks, the relentlessness of bots also makes them great at extracting non-standardized data that is almost always spread

across separate databases, standardizing the data and working with it, whether to identify new information, create data lakes or populate a new, successfully integrated database. This works fantastically to support Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence.

CEOCFO: *Are there particular types of projects that you prefer, given a choice?*

Ms. Steele: We love any kind of business process and systems modernization project. They are interesting, rewarding, and transformative in many respects. Modernization projects significantly impact the ability of our customers to perform their work and we value the opportunity to make a difference, to have positive impact, for our customers. Our analysts, architects and programmers love that kind of work. We enjoy customers who want to advance their organizations' capabilities by using technology as it gives us a more flexibility to move that organization even further into the future.

There are many capabilities that exist now that really were not possible five or ten years ago, for example, around RPA, machine learning and artificial intelligence. Digital process automation and intelligent automation technologies have evolved significantly. ML/AI technologies enable better insights into data and trends and enable predictive analytics and that are useful in the decision-making context. It is exciting when the customer really wants to take advantage of newer technologies to achieve transformation; not just do a rip and replace step-up to newer software because the old software does not work anymore.

CEOCFO: *Can you tell when you first talk to someone if they really embrace change or does it take a while to unearth what they are willing to do?*

Ms. Steele: People are all different. Some will clearly talk with more passion and enthusiasm about what can be accomplished; they embrace change and the power of technology to drive change. Others may be more restrained, but as you work with them over time, their appetite for change becomes apparent. Some are more receptive than others. For managers, often their position is reflective of the organization as a whole, how willing an organization is to undergo change. And then there are those who seem like they embrace change, but its only in the abstract and if it doesn't impact them personally. As the saying goes, time reveals all.

CEOCFO: *How do you create the best possible outcome for your clients when there may be budget constraints? There is also so much new in technology so what you create today six months or a year down the line, may not be relevant. How do those two elements come into play?*

Ms. Steele: In a few ways. First, they come into play with respect to the architecture of the solution. As I described, we work with our customers to understand the totality of the business processes and rules governing the solution. We also explore future plans and anticipated needs, so that we create a solution architecture and design that can support those future potential needs. If the customer anticipates a significant change in what they are doing today compared to tomorrow,

we want the solution to be adaptable to future requirements. For example, we might put hooks in the code to add capabilities when future budgets permit.

Second, part of our job is staying on top of technology and technology trends, so that we can give our customers the best advice on is a good solution set for them given their current technology investments and the trends that are happening in the marketplace. This is critical so that customers don't end up to technology that rapidly becomes obsolete. Third, it is helpful to understand the customer's budget and their limitations, because we can then work closely with them on prioritizing capabilities and features. Again, perhaps putting in hooks in the code or other types of design flexibility to allow the customer at some future point to implement change with the least amount of cost, risk and disruption.

CEOCFO: *There are many solutions providers to choose from. Why does, why should InterImage stand out?*

Ms. Steele: InterImage stands out for a few reasons! We have a long heritage in working from both the business and technology sides, so we provide that good marriage between the two. Often, I have seen beautiful looking technology solutions that just do not fit a business and that then represents a waste of money. The greatest technologists in the world will not get an organization to the right end place unless you understand the business perspective, and we do. That is a distinguishing advantage.

InterImage is a small business and that brings a lot of flexibility in the way in which we work with customers and the tremendous quality of people that we bring to the table. Customers always get the A team. That makes a difference when it comes to designing and implementing effective technology solutions because the reality is technology has become very complex. Third, InterImage is a company that invests resources in learning and exploring new technologies. For example, we have a team that does lots of work on machine learning and artificial intelligence, so we can bring that knowledge and those capabilities to our customers, already tested and proven out. We are not walking a new technology road for the first time with a customer. We have been down that road and that makes us better advisors to our customers.

