The Ipswitch Way:
Easing Technology Use from Trial to Long-Term Daily Basis

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ipswitch
Secure. Control. Perform.

How has the face of healthcare IT changed since 2004?

A: Just about everything has been revolutionizing and it has been remarkable, from the research and development to the actual technology used in the care of patients. With that, of course, comes regulatory and data privacy concerns. Recently, I visited a doctor for a routine exam in the US and there is protection of patient information unlike anything I have experienced before. Encryption, password protection, the ability to have live dialogues with your physician at the push of a button...the list goes on. Overall, I think the face of healthcare IT has transformed so much end-to-end. From the patient to the information, from pre- to post-care, the evolution has been tremendous over the last decade.

Technologies like cloud, IOT, BYOD can make healthcare organizations more vulnerable to threats yet their benefits are boundless. What advice would you give to healthcare providers to ensure data protection in a high-tech healthcare environment?

A: First of all, I think there is little choice anymore but to adopt such technologies to get ahead of the curve. Every institution, regardless of size, needs to have a strategy to mitigate risk in the event of breaches. Data privacy, regulatory compliance and best practice will be critical areas to look into.

Let's learn a bit more about Ipswitch. Your mission is to make complex IT simple. What initiatives has Ipswitch embarked on globally to help providers do that in the past 12 months?

A: So just a bit of background which I think is relevant here: Ipswitch started out, in the classic storybook sense, in the garage of our owner Roger Greene. His vision was to develop easy solutions to resolve big headaches. He wanted the solution or the product to be easy to try, to test out, to install, to configure, to implement, and to use on a daily basis. So throughout these 26 years, the premise of Ipswitch is this: the ease of use from trial to long-term daily basis. Within that, we have two major product lines, which are the network monitoring solution and the secure file transfer solution. Specifically over the last 12 months, we've focused a lot on usability to improve the interaction between user and technology. We have also made the solution progressively easier to use while balancing this with the addition of richer features that are aligned with global compliance and laws. We continue to advocate uptake at the grass-roots level, allowing as many people as possible to be exposed to the technology and tools free of charge.

Is there anywhere you are going with these free open source tools?

A: These tools are free of charge and we have no plans of discontinuing them. So they will be available in the market and progressively we may add features or more tools for complimentary use too. The concept is that for users who have a very specific and limited need, or who want to test something specific and get a taste of how we do things, we want to assist them. If at a later stage a more comprehensive need arises where they require our commercial solutions we hope that at that time we would have already paved a natural path for them to move towards those payable technologies.

What is the most common IT pain point your international customers face not just in healthcare but in general?

A: In this day and age, administrators face pressures in terms of bandwidth of time to do multiple things and doing more with less. They look towards consolidating solutions so that they can do more with fewer solutions to implement. Of course the other pain point would be ensuring control and security of their environments. At a granular level though, the first pain point is more prevalent. Sometimes the user may have a need or a project with tight timelines but they face challenges right at the get-go where they are evaluating the solution(s) that will help get them to the end goal. This is where our interaction with them sometimes helps to push them along especially when their time is stretched by multiple priorities.

Is this problem exacerbated in the healthcare industry especially when a failure could mean life or death?

A: I think it's pervasive for the role market-wide but by the nature of the business, and if you would just spend a little bit of time in the hospital you can see that, the healthcare industry is arguable the highest pressure environment that one can think of. The pressure exists in more roles than just the IT administrator within the healthcare setting.

What is the biggest challenge to successful IT implementation?

End-to-End Focus

What is the top healthcare IT area you want to improve this year?

Alignment and Compliance

What is one word that comes to mind when you think about connectivity?

I will have to give you two: Risk and Progress

Apart from the healthcare industry, which is the next in line for high pressure based on your experience?

A: It's a difficult question to answer. From a vertical market perspective, Ipswitch has pretty even market penetration across our product lines in different verticals. Not to dance around your question but I think at the end of the day, healthcare aside, the role of the user is high-pressure almost no matter which industries they are from.

First, there is security pressure. From compliance to best practice and risk mitigation, the consequences if not handled properly could mean fines or reputational risk. Then there is also the internal user expectation and need. If you talk to a network administrator for example, he would probably want to avoid, like a plaque, his colleagues from the legal or sales departments for example sending him messages like "What happened", "Why are my emails slow", "Why can't I download this application", "Why is our CRM not working properly" and so on. They are likely to prefer their peers to open IT tickets so that they can follow standard processes to resolve any particular issue. But the reality is that they are pummeled with issues all the time, and the volume of issues is high. This also contributes to the high pressure that we see.

Can you share a lesson that you've learned on the journey to success?

A: It boils down to listening to your customer. Product roadmap, product development, marketing strategy and interaction by sales people aside, it all boils down to being very attentive to what the customer need is. Success is based on being able to reasonably fulfill that.

What does success look like for Ipswitch?

A: For Ipswitch, it means to continue to have the sustainable longevity in the market that has been the case up to now. Again, it can only be achieved by delivering solutions or product functionalities that customers need or expect.

For myself it's about being able to continue catering to what the customer really needs. We are only as good as what we can deliver, whatever it is that we do, as long as we can keep customer reasonably satisfied, I think that the satisfaction leads on to us ourselves and the rest falls into place on its own.

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