

## Welcome to ASPECTS EXTRA, January 2019

BY JAMES GREENE, ASP DIRECTOR

**W**elcome to the January 2019 edition of *ASPECTS EXTRA*! This is a public edition of *ASPECTS*, the official newsletter of the Association of Software Professionals.

### What is the ASP?

In 1987, the ASP pioneered the try-before-you-buy marketing method that is now universal in the software industry. The ASP can help you develop more marketable software, and sell it more effectively.

As a member of the ASP, you have access to the knowledge and experience of hundreds of software developers and vendors. With these resources, you can save time and avoid frustration by getting help with your toughest business, technical, and marketing challenges. ASP's spam-free discussion groups are open 24/7, and members are able to provide valuable feedback and help each other solve business problems.

### What is ASPECTS?

*ASPECTS* is the official newsletter of ASP. It is published four times per year with in-depth business and marketing insights from software industry professionals. This public

edition of *ASPECTS* is an excerpt of the members-only *ASPECTS* edition for January 2019. What you don't see in this version are ASP official business and announcements, e.g. information about ongoing projects and initiatives, official announcements, membership anniversaries, etc.

### Join the ASP

Would you like to become a member of the leading software industry organization and gain instant access to decades of knowledge and experience? All you have to do is visit the ASP website [www.asp-software.org](http://www.asp-software.org) and click on the **Join Now** button. You will be redirected to our membership page on WildApricot, our membership management service. Or you can directly visit

[asp-software.wildapricot.org](http://asp-software.wildapricot.org)

and save yourself a click!

### Member Benefits

As a member of the Association of Software Professionals, you have access to our discussion forum, exclusive offers and discounts on products and services offered by other ASP members and a the opportunity to steer and influence the software industry of the future. If you are not already a member, join today!

### Follow the ASP on Social and Professional Network sites!



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*James Greene, Editor  
[aspects@asp-software.org](mailto:aspects@asp-software.org)*

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James Greene, Editor at  
[aspects@asp-software.org](mailto:aspects@asp-software.org)



#### Upcoming ASPECTS Publication Dates and Submission Deadlines

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ASPECTS Volume 30, No. 2  
Publication: **April 15, 2019**  
Submission Deadline: **Mar. 31, 2019**

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ASPECTS Volume 30, No. 3  
Publication: **July 15, 2019**  
Submission Deadline: **Jun. 30, 2019**

—  
ASPECTS Volume 30, No. 4  
Publication: **October 14, 2019**  
Submission Deadline: **Sept. 30, 2019**

## Annual Meeting and Election Results

The Annual Meeting of the Association of Software Professionals was concluded on Monday, December 10, 2018.

There were three candidates running for the open Directors seats:

**Jeff Gibson**, the ASP President, was re-elected for another two-year (2019-2020) term.

**Howard Sobel**, the ASP Board Chair, was also re-elected for another two-year term.

**James Bragg** was nominated to fill the vacant Director seat and has joined the Board for a two-year term as well.

Congratulations to all three of these gentlemen!



*Now that we have your attention...  
imagine how others would be hungry to  
learn about your products and services!*

*Contact the Editor for ASPECTS  
advertising options!*

## News from the PAD Working Group

BY JOEL DIAMOND, PAD COMMITTEE CHAIR

All ASP members are invited to join and participate in the the LinkedIn PAD® Committee.

- Tucows Downloads, BrotherSoft, Softpedia and Softonic are now officially supporting the latest PAD Specification 4.0.
- Softonic has requested PAD to support Web Apps and SaaS apps with PAD Files.
- Plans to support the Windows 10 AppStore, MS Edge extensions and Office Addins are under review.
- PAD Support for Open Source apps is under review.
- PAD Certification, to be required for PAD v4.1 compliance, is under development. The CSA (Clean Software Alliance) is already involved.
- Publishers have requested new services to aid their use of PAD.
- A tool to specifically submit, manage a PAD file on Facebook is under development. Similar tools for Instagram, Reedit, Twitter are also under review.

PAD Working Group on LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8656033>

## You've got the Killer App...Now What? (Part 3)

BY JAMES GREENE, ASP DIRECTOR

Previously in this series, I looked at some of the challenges that developers face while trying to build a successful software company: Designing your product for an international audience, concurrent usage, and role-based permissions. In this part, I will continue with some of additional hurdles, starting with the challenge of providing service and support for your product and your user community.



### Providing Product Support

In the previous installment of this series, I mentioned “tunnel vision” as a challenge for many ISVs. Another aspect of overcoming this tunnel vision, besides ensuring that your product can be integrated into a heterogeneous technology landscape, is to ensure that you consider your entire product life-cycle: The design, building, testing and release of the product is just the beginning!

The use of iterative, agile development methods has led to more focus on the product development and more frequent releases. This is a huge benefit for winning over new customers, since you are able to quickly implement new features and meet new demands. At the same time, it can be a huge burden for your existing customer base and your support team: Your existing customers will not want to install a new version every three months, and your support team will have a seemingly endless array of releases and versions to support!

Life Science companies are required by law to verify that any computerized system (including hardware, software, and infrastructure components) that could directly or indirectly have an impact on patient safety, product quality or data integrity, is “fit for use.” In other words, every new version of software must be

formally tested and accepted before it can be used. This can take a few days for a simple product – even if the actual test can be completed in less than an hour, the need for formal documentation (i.e. approved test plans, executed and reviewed test reports, with formal tracking of any test defects) significantly increases the overall effort and time needed. Complex business applications often require many weeks of testing, since they are used in many different locations and business areas with multiple configurations.

Once the software has been tested and is technically accepted, the user community must be informed about the new version and, if necessary, trained on what has changed and how to use the new features. This again can take weeks or months, depending upon the size and diversity of the user community.

For this reason, many large companies chose not to deploy new software versions unless there is an overriding business need. The cost of testing, deploying and training a new version is simply not justified unless the new version provides a considerable return on this investment.

### What does this mean for the software manufacturer?

As the manufacturer of a software product, you must continue to provide support for the product as long as the customer is paying for that service. You have to be able to provide service for the version that you sold to the customer – not just the latest release.

This is a challenge for every software company. When Microsoft terminated the technical support for Windows® XP in 2014, there were still millions of PCs worldwide using the operating system, including stand-alone and embedded systems used in laboratories and manufacturing systems around the world. Even today, almost five years later, there are STILL millions of PCs

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## You've got the Killer App...

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running Windows® XP and servers running Windows® 2003 or 2008 around the globe.

Microsoft, as one of the largest companies in the world, may be able to refuse to support for older versions of their software, but most ISVs are not in that position. "Update to the latest version" may be all that is required to fix a problem, but as a software publisher, you may not be aware of the costs which your customer would incur. Making a small patch to an older version of your product could save your customer many thousands of dollars in re-testing and re-training efforts.

This implies that you must have the ability to recreate historic versions of your product on demand. In order to achieve this, you will need to maintain the original source code as well as the original compiler version used to build it. Even a minor change to the compiler version or system libraries could have a huge

impact on the resulting executable code and require a complete set of regression tests before the system can be used in a regulated business area.

### Coming up next

In the next part of this series, I will look at the challenges of ensuring security and data integrity and providing service to your user community.

*James Greene holds a B. Sci. in Computer Science from California Lutheran University. His professional career spans more than 30 years. He holds professional certifications in Project Management, Quality Management and Computerized Systems Validation. James is a Senior Manager and Partner at Significon AG in Mainz, Germany. James is also a Director of the ASP, and a former Director and founding member of the PMI Switzerland Chapter.*



Twitter: [@JamesGreene6409](https://twitter.com/JamesGreene6409)

## Ask Your Customers About Their Growth Goals

BY JESSICA DEWELL, ASP DIRECTOR

**W**hen was the last time you thought about how quickly technology changes? The change directly impacts your business. Maybe not immediately, yet definitely.

A multipurpose way to stay on top of change, create communication between your company and customers, and effectively anticipate change is to use your content differently.

A Walker study<sup>4</sup> found that in just a couple of years, (as early as 2020), customer experience will overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator.

How do we stay competitive on our lean, shoestring, and automated business processes?



### What if you let go of FAQ, knowledge base, and other static content as core support?

Sixty-two percent of companies view customer experience delivered by the contact centers as a competitive differentiator.<sup>1</sup>

We live in a world of instant gratification, and while these tools are useful and helpful—what about when a customer prefers a different way to communicate? Think through and offer a communication option to create a positive experience for them. Maybe email, a chat box on the website, even using a hashtag or being tagged in social media. It may be a channel outside of that.

Regardless, the focus here is creating paths for communication that best support customers. Because the more we spend on the experience, the more we develop better relationships with our customers.

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## Ask Your Customers About Their Growth Goals

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What this looks like for your company will vary based on your growth strategy and plans, and what your objectives are to maintain a competitive advantage over time.

### **Do you know what your customers are grappling with? How you can help them?**

Asking questions is the easiest way to get information. Does asking your customers seem intrusive? Inquiries take everybody's time, a precious resource. Yet if you wanted to know about consumers' growth strategy, they might want to respond with personal contact, not through digital communications. Regarding the concern about time, I'll ask this question: How can you help your customers achieve their growth strategy if you don't know what their goals are?

A good business practice is to evaluate what happened using data from the past. A great business practice is to use that information and look forward—to anticipate what your customers want to do their jobs better AND what they need to achieve their growth goals. By helping customers grow, you help your company grow.

### **Here are three ways to use content to ask your customers about their growth goals.**

And, at the same time leverage what you've already created. The next time you take a critical look at a performance of blog posts, tweets, and even that new website marketing blurb, ask these questions: Does the copy accurately reflect your business goals? How can you build on what you have to make the connection your business wants?

1. Synthesize goals that customers share with you and update your content. Tell customers how your product will help them achieve their goals.

The book *WHAT THEY DON'T TEACH YOU AT HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL*<sup>2</sup> discusses a study where only three percent of people interviewed had clear written goals. When interviewed 10 years later, these individuals made ten times more money than the other ninety-seven percent of study participants combined.

You want to connect to target audiences effectively—to leverage messaging and content to work for your business. There are ways our ego interferes! Maybe it's having to create new/better/more content. Maybe it's dismissing the importance of well-positioned content. Maybe it's that we'd rather company resources be focused on other things.

When we are looking at the growth of our company, maybe we don't even have company goals written down. And, our customers likely don't have their goals written down either.

2. Create a path to action and create a direction for customers and prospects to follow. Your plans will vary depending on content type and purpose.

Landing pages, calls to action and action statements create a clear route for people to follow. (For further information, read "CALLS TO ACTION: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?"<sup>3</sup>) Even when soft selling and relationship building are primary strengths, venturing out of the box online and stating what you have to offer is necessary.

You carefully crafted a marketing message aimed at a target market segment. The communication will reach the intended audience. Yet with so much to sift through online, an individual may set aside or even forget a message lacking an action statement.

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## Ask Your Customers About Their Growth Goals

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Asking what your customer growth goals are allow the creation of marketing and advertising messaging crafted to reach more potential clients like your current customer base. The performance of the messaging on entry points to your business – like content and landing pages – offers performance data. This loop of information creates a way to experiment from knowns. Because you know what your customers' growth goals are.

3. Keep asking your customers about their growth goals. Doing so will provide insight on how to adapt and achieve your company's growth strategy.

First, use awareness indicators. They include silences, non-verbal communication, an active or passive language used, etc. There will be times that specific information is left out-intentionally-which either can't or won't be shared. When the latter, continue to have conversations that build trust by helping clients feel less pressure in their role.

Second, find context in multiple responses to questions. Go and pick out four responses to the questions you ask everyone in the conversation. Identify commonalities and differences that both actually contain a common root.

Third, apply filters to align ideas to growth goals. Apply your vision, mission, and values to remove ideas that don't align. Apply the short-term and long-term strategy to discard ideas that don't align. Dig in and explore possible ideas that are left based on time, energy and resources available.

To be able to connect a clear and consistent message to the current and potential customers:

Look ahead to growth by looking back at what we know.

When we ask questions in addition to using collected data, we have a the opportunity to look deeper and find patterns that we can use to achieve growth goals.

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Jess Dewell, CEO of Red Direction, implements frameworks for business resilience (RedDirection.com). She is a nationally-recognized business development tactician and popular host of The Voice of BOLD Business Radio. She can be contacted at [jess@reddirection.com](mailto:jess@reddirection.com).



Twitter: [@jess\\_dewell](https://twitter.com/jess_dewell)

*Wishing Everyone  
The Best In 2019!*

*May all your apps  
and services  
Go Viral!!!*

*- james@wyllder.media*



## Five Quick Copywriting Tips

BY IVAN LEVISON

Whether you're writing or evaluating emails, web pages, or just about anything else, it pays to keep these important tips in mind. Be my guest and check them out...



### #1. Keep it simple.

Your prospects don't want to think about your message. They want to understand, quickly, exactly what your software product or service can do for them. Don't use long words when short ones will do. And don't use long sentences when short ones will do. Explain benefits clearly. Strip off the verbal fat and write crisp copy that gets results!

### #2. Keep it short.

Some years ago, I used to write long sales letters for clients. "The more you tell, the more you sell" was my watchword. And the long stuff pulled just great. Now things have changed. Readers are less patient. Their attention spans are shorter. Which means that the emails, web sites, and other things I write are getting shorter too. Does this move to shorter formats bother me? Absolutely not! The only thing any direct response copywriter should care about is what works.

### #3. Keep it lively.

Hey, it isn't a crime in this country to have a little enthusiasm or a sense of humor. If your marketing materials are flat or boring, bring a little personality to the party. Your communications need to truly engage the reader and connect at some emotional level. So don't be afraid to write with a little punch. The spark you or your copywriter brings to a project can make all the difference!

### #4. Keep it real.

"Creative" advertising agencies—the ones with the hip bubble-gum machines and barber chairs—are often into puns, jokes, double meanings, metaphors, cleverness, and hilarity of all kinds. The ads and commercials they create are meant to be fun. Chances are, though, you will do much better being direct and down to earth. When you're selling your software product or service, resist the urge to get "creative." Keep your feet on the ground, be direct, sell with conviction, and all will be well!

### #5. Keep it persuasive.

You must never forget that to be successful you have to become (or hire) a terrific sales person. What's the best way to sell someone something? The answer is face to face, one on one. When you're right there with a prospect, you can "read" them, answer their questions, overcome resistance, and perhaps most important, close the sale! But we can't be everywhere, selling in person. This means our web sites, emails, sales letters, and the like, are proxies for us. They are, as someone once said, "salesmanship in print." Make sure that all your sales materials are selling hard and the coming years will be profitable indeed.

*Ivan Levison is a freelance copywriter who builds profits for software companies. He's spent over thirty years writing mail and web content for industry leaders like Microsoft and Adobe. To download his report "101 Ways To Double Your Response Rates" visit <http://www.levison.com> or contact Ivan by phone at +1-415-461-0672.*



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Address association correspondence to:

Association of Software Professionals  
Rich Holler, Office Manager  
P.O. Box 1522  
Martinsville IN 46151

Voice +1 (765) 349-4740  
(Weekdays, 9am to 4pm Eastern)

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