

ASPECTS®

The Monthly Newsletter of the Association of Software Professionals

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Convention Special

September 2013

Do You Know What It Takes to Succeed in the Software Business?

by Gianfranco Berardi
President, ASP

Are you thinking about starting your own software business? Are you worried about unanswered questions regarding the process of doing so? Are you concerned about the risk?

If you have started your own business, are you not getting the results you desire? Do you work incredibly hard, putting in long days, only to feel you have nothing to show for it?

If you have been running your software business for years, are you struggling to take it to the next level? Are you worried about competitors getting ahead of you? Are you concerned about new trends and market opportunities you might be missing out on?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then you'll want to save time and avoid frustration by getting help with your toughest business, technical, and marketing challenges.

But who do you ask for help?

Invest in your success, and join the Association of Software Professionals today at www.asp-software.org/join

The ASP has more than 25 years of archived knowledge and experience from members who helped people such as yourself find ways to make running your own software business more enjoyable and more profitable.

Members receive *ASPECTS*, the monthly newsletter filled with business and marketing articles written by fellow software developers who will share with you their success secrets. This issue of *ASPECTS* is only a sample of the monthly newsletter that members receive. Join the ASP today, and you'll also have access to over two decades of *ASPECTS* archives and member knowledge.

If you are looking for feedback about any aspect of your business, whether it is product design, legal issues, or marketing help, you should start by posting in the **members-only private discussion groups** to get feed-



back from like-minded software business owners. The discussion groups are arguably the ASP's greatest benefit. Join the ASP today, and see multiple years' worth of informative member-to-member conversations and possibly the answers to your questions that someone may have already asked.

ASP members receive **exclusive discounts on software, tools, and services**. Many members claim that the discounts alone have paid them back by an order of magnitude for their \$100/year membership. Join the ASP today, and invest the savings back into your business.



As an example of the savings you can receive as a member, this month the Association of Software Professionals welcomes you back to Reno, Nevada for **ISVCon 2013**, the conference for software business owners! Join the ASP today, and you'll be able to sign up for ISVCon at the ASP member registration price, another perk of membership.

Last year's conference featured a fantastic lineup of speakers and sessions with actionable information to help small software business owners with marketing, crafting content for social media, identifying opportunities in the market, and learning about upcoming trends. If you missed it, be sure to watch the presentations in the ISVCon video archive at www.isvcon.org/videos.php

For 2013, we are excited to have another three days of education, inspiration, and camaraderie. More information is available at <http://www.isvcon.org/> but between the incredible speaker lineup and the chance to see old friends and meet new ones, this conference is a must for software business owners looking to succeed.

Whether you are an aspiring software entrepreneur or someone with an established business, join the ASP today. For the amount of value you'll receive for only \$100/year, you'll be glad you did.

I hope to see you at ISVCon in Reno and in our discussion groups online.

Gianfranco Berardi is not only the President of the ASP, but he is also a member. He runs GBGames, LLC as an indie game developer at www.gbgames.com.



Trade Show Calendar

ASPECTS is published for advising members of group activities and sharing of information. All material is compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task or computer system. Comments are the view of their author and no other person or organization.

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Quarter page

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6 issues \$220

Business card

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6 issues \$155

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6 issues \$155

TwilioCon 2013

San Francisco, California
September 17-19, 2013
www.twilio.com/conference

ISDEF2013

Moscow, Russia
September 26-30, 2013
www.isdef.org/ru/conference/isdef2013/

ISVCon 2013

Atlantis Casino Resort Spa
Reno Nevada
September 27-29 2013
www.ISVCon.org



Casual Connect Kyiv

Kiev, Ukraine, October 23-25, 2013
kyiv.casualconnect.org/

European Software Conference

Venice, Italy
November 2-3, 2013
www.euroconference.org/index.html

AnDevCon (Android)

San Francisco, California
Nov 12-15, 2013
www.andevcon.com

Casual Connect Europe

Amsterdam, Netherlands
February 11-13, 2014
europe.casualconnect.org/

Game Developers Conference (GDC 2014)

San Francisco, California
March 17-21, 2014
www.gdconf.com/

Microsoft TechEd

May 12-15, 2014
Houston, Texas
northamerica.mstched.com

Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference 2014

Washington DC
July 13-17, 2014
www.digitalwpc.com

Multiple Dates & Cities, World-wide

WordCamp

WordPress Conferences
Events up to Nov 24, 2013
central.wordcamp.org/schedule/

Send conference news to the ASPECTS editor. This list only shows events that are new or soon. View the full list online at: www.asp-software.org/resources/events.asp



The Association of Software Professionals™ is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to furthering try-before-you-buy as a unique software marketing alternative to commercial distribution methods.

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Publishers Reap Benefits from Global PAD v4 Repository

by Joel Diamond
PAD Chair, ASP

The PAD Specification v4.0 is nearly 9 months old and the community of publishers as well as download sites, software catalogs and other PAD support channels are already reaping benefits.

Coinciding with the release of PAD v4.0 Specification last December 2012, AppVisor.com was launched as a complete web-based editing tool, publication, hosting and promotion/submission solution for publishers and their software applications. The v4.0 Specification made a critical change in where publishers host their PAD files, moving from their websites to the Global PAD Repository, hosted at <http://repository.appvisor.com>.

Problems with the existing PAD repository, hosted on the ASP PAD site during the v3.x era, were numerous. At the time of v4.0 launch, the old repository contained several hundred thousands of applications, with zero validation, authentication, or verification. The result was literally tens of thousands of PAD SPAM listings, defined as illegitimate applications infested with fraud, malware, spam, pirated ("warez"), and TM/copyright infringed application listings. Many of the unchecked added submissions were coming from international sources with known malware ties. Instead of investing the time to validate such listings, the PAD Committee decided to eliminate the old repository, replace it with a secure solution and host, that benefited both publisher and submitted sites.

Before a publishers application is added to the Global PAD Repository, it must be submitted for publication, which initiates a process of validation, verification, and manual review of all the content contained in the PAD file. To date, nearly 60% of the submitted PAD files for publication to the repository contain errors of one sort or another. A notification is sent to the publisher containing the specific error(s) and a request for correction is made. If the correction is made by the publisher, the PAD file is resubmitted for publication and reviewed again. If it is approved, it will be added to the repository.

There are many benefits from the Global PAD Repository for both publishers and sites that base their content on the publisher's application PAD file. For example, websites can immediately accept the PAD file since it's been fully validated and authenticated. This can significantly reduce the lead time that many sites face as they may deal with up to 8000 pad updates a month. For sites that deploy automated polling of PAD files hosted on the

publishers website and rarely perform any review, their content updates to their catalog will be secured. More importantly, the goal of the PAD v4.0 Specification, which is the complete elimination of PAD Spam (see above), is significantly advanced.

For the publisher, hosting on the PAD Repository will offer them the full benefits of DynamicPAD, the unique and powerful tracking service that permits unique content per site as well as real-time analytics on a per-site basis. This is accomplished through the unique generation of dynamic URLs for all links in a publishers PAD file that are specific to each site that the application is submitted to. DynamicPAD offers the publisher the ability to track how many downloads or click-throughs of their buy buttons have occurred, by site and time. This brings an entirely new tool for publishers to use for planning and implementing their promotional or affiliate campaigns for updated versions of their product.

Joel Diamond is Chair of the PAD Specification Committee and VP, Business Development at Wugnet Publications. He can be reached at Joeld@appvisor.com.



WRITE FOR FAME; WRITE FOR CASH

ASPECTS, the monthly newsletter of the Association of Software Professionals, needs writers. We're

ASPECTS AD RATES

Full page: Measures 7-1/8" wide x 9" high	
1 issue	\$120,
3 issues	\$330,
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Quarter page: 3.4" x 4.5"	
1 issue	\$40,
3 issues	\$115,
6 issues	\$220.
Half page: Measures 7-1/8" x 4.5"	
1 issue	\$70,
3 issues	\$200,
6 issues	\$360.
Business card: Measures 3.4 x 2.25"	
1 issue	\$30,
3 issues	\$80,
6 issues	\$155.

paying up to \$100 for each first-run feature article. Topics needed include how-to, tech, marketing, reviews, more. The best way to reach ASP members is to write regularly for ASPECTS.

<http://www.asp-software.org>
Contact the editor at aspects@asp-software.org

Flying through hyperspace ain't like dustin' crops

by Al Harberg

the Software Marketing Glossary guy

In today's troubled economy, a lot of microISVs who sell consumer software are trying to add a business application or two to their product mix. As Han Solo explained to Luke Skywalker in the first Star Wars movie, piloting the Millennium Falcon to another galaxy is not like flying a crop duster on the family farm. Similarly, developing and marketing a business application is not like developing yet another program for home users. Software developers who understand the differences between the two marketing challenges can do a better job of generating income with their new marketing focus. Here are some insights about what you might encounter as you move into the business software arena:

Business Software Sells in Bad Economic Times

If you're selling games or home entertainment software, you can expect to feel the pain of a turbulent economy. If people are worried about buying the basic necessities for their families, you can be sure that fewer of them are looking for recreational software.

It's different in the business software marketplace. If you're marketing a productivity application that can make a company's employees work more efficiently, then you have an opportunity to sell it, even in a troubled economy. In fact, you may be more likely to entice business managers and entrepreneurs to purchase your program when money is tight, especially if you can quantify the savings that they'll enjoy if they make the buying decision.

Business buyers are always looking for ways to save time, save money, stay ahead of their competitors, do things tomorrow that they couldn't do yesterday, and impress their customers. Make it easy for your software-buying prospects to understand how your software will make their lives better. Demonstrate that your software will pay for itself in a reasonable time frame, and you'll increase your chances of being successful in the business software marketplace.

Your Software Has to Solve a Problem

Your application doesn't have to be the best software available to the prospective business software buyer. In fact, it's probably easier to sell a small, affordable application that solves a specific problem than it is to sell a feature-rich powerhouse program that solves several problems.

You're not selling to a corporation or to a nonprofit enterprise. You're selling to a specific buyer of business software who is trying to solve his or her problem. Most



likely, your prospect is a good corporate citizen who will try to do what is best for their employer. But it's likely that the prospect has a particular problem that is causing them frustration, or wasting too much of their team's time, or keeping them from moving forward on a major project that is important to the company—and to their next performance appraisal.

Perhaps you're offering a data-tweaking application that fills a business need that isn't being met by the popular powerhouse program. Your single-function program grabs a text or word processing file, massages the data, and recreates the file in the format that the installed powerhouse needs. Or perhaps it's JPG images, PDF files, spreadsheets, or some other type of data file that your business program massages. The key to selling a lot of copies of your application is to make it simple for the customer.

Make it easy for your customers to create a template that will allow them to run your application with just a few keystrokes. Include a command line interface so they can fully automate the process. Design it for simplicity, and your customers will buy.

Market it simply, too. Don't try to sell your program as a tech toy. Instead, explain to prospects how efficiently you can solve the nagging problem that is wasting their time and costing them money, day after day.

Learn to Write the Way Your Customers Talk

If you try to use a general business sales message to market your software into a wide range of industries, you're not going to sell as many copies as you would like to. Instead, tailor your sales message to each target market. If you don't translate your sales message into the language of each target market, you'll find that your typical prospect lacks the ability to understand how useful your software would be.

It's easy to reach individual markets with customized sales messages. On your home page, create a break-out box that says something like:

Solutions for...

- Attorneys
- Accountants

- Architects
- Engineers
- etc.

Send each prospect to a page that speaks directly to him or her about the problems that they're wrestling with. Tailor each of these landing pages to the business people you're trying to reach. Don't use simple word substitution to try to fool prospects—or to try to fool the search engines—into thinking that you have lots of original, unique content. Instead, take the time to create keyword-rich pages that sound like they were written by a professional in each industry that you're targeting.

Don't Create Sales Hype

While I'm not certain that sales hype and marketing jargon can be effective when selling consumer software, I'm positive that a vapid sales message will fail in the business software arena.

Craft a tight, crisp message that demonstrates that you understand your prospects' problem, and that you offer a solution that will save them money and eliminate some pain that they're currently experiencing.

Write your sales message the way you would say it to a friend if you could choose your words carefully.

Be Credible

A home computer user who wants to buy a fun adventure

game doesn't care about the stability of your company. Sure, they'd prefer to buy software from a company that is doing business from a country that has a good reputation for fighting credit card fraud. But prospects may not be too interested in your postal address or phone number. They just want to play the computer game that you've developed.

Selling business software is different. If a business software buyer has a problem with your application, they want to find help files and FAQ pages. But if they still can't solve their problem, they want a phone number that they can call to get immediate help.

If you're selling mission-critical software, you need to put your phone number and postal address on every page of your website. Even if you're selling a productivity application, you need to have an "About" page and a "Contact" page to show that you're easy to find and eager to help your customers solve software problems.

The Bottom Line

It might make a lot of sense for you to add some business productivity applications to your current portfolio of programs. It's complicated. But if you plan ahead, you can move from home software to business applications smoothly—and profitably.

Since 1984, Al Harberg has been helping software developers write press releases and send them to the editors. You can check out his Software Marketing Blog on <http://www.software-marketing-blog.com/>

Top 10 Mistakes Made When Hiring Freelancers

by Jim Coutu

Owner, GatorData, Inc.

When hiring freelancers, mistakes can be made at almost any turn. As an arbitrator who specializes in freelance projects, I have arbitrated over a thousand failed projects. Many times I have seen cases where someone hiring a freelancer made easily-correctable mistakes that caused their project to fail. Here are the top ten mistakes made when hiring freelancers.

1. Not creating a thorough project summary or contract.

A project summary is used by the freelancer to place their bid on a project. It should list all the work needed to be completed by the freelancer. In addition, it should also contain the technology required, approximate deadline, and examples of similar work (if available).

For example, a project summary for a website should include all the following information:

- The size: number of approximate web pages.
 - Style: (list similar websites, similar graphics, or comparable templates)
 - Technology to use: (html, php, css, etc.) If you do not know what to use, ask the freelancers to suggest.
 - Features: ecommerce, forum hosting, contact forms, etc.
 - The kind of server or web hosting to be used.
- Regardless of the type of project (software, website, graphics, marketing, writing, etc.) your project summary should also meet these requirements:
- It should be easy to read and understand.
 - The summary should not contain any vague superlatives like "best", "exciting", or "first class".
 - It should state that the source files will be required.

If a project summary is not thorough, it will create problems in regards to project responsibilities, issues with communication, and delays. It takes more work up front to create a thorough project summary, but it pays off later with a

smoother working environment for both you and the freelancer.

Vague requirements lead to assumptions (for both the freelancer and client) that do not necessarily agree.

2. Using the wrong project type.

There are three types of projects available when hiring a freelancer—Fixed Price, Hourly, and Contest.

Fixed price projects are projects that are done for a set price that is negotiated up front. Hourly projects are where the freelancer gets paid by the hour. Contests are used primarily for graphics projects where you pick a winner from a group of entries.

Each project type has their strengths and weaknesses.

- Contests for graphics projects will give you a wide variety of styles to choose from, however, they are more expensive than hiring a single graphics artist.
- Hourly projects require checking in on the freelancer so that they are not overbilling.
- Fixed price projects limit your ability to make changes once work has started.

Generally speaking, using a fixed price is better for small projects that are not likely to have changes once work begins. Hourly projects are better for longer projects that may require changes once work begins.

3. Hiring the wrong freelancer.

The major freelance sites such as oDesk, Elance and freelancer.com all have lots of data on the freelancers that use their services. Knowing what data to look for is key to hiring a good freelancer.

All the freelance sites give an overall rating for an individual freelancer (usually from one to five stars). This rating is useless for three reasons.

- Most employers tend to rate freelancers the same. (5 stars for a completed project, 4 stars for a project with a little trouble, 1 or 2 stars for projects with trouble that were paid for.)
- Freelancers are not rated on projects that are not completed. Most sites have a policy where freelancers do not get rated if they do not get paid. These failed projects are not counted in their stats.
- If a freelancer's rating gets too low, it is not uncommon for them to open a new account and abandon the other account. (Note: this is banned by all the freelance sites, but this can be difficult to detect.)

Better indicators of expert freelancers are the number of projects completed (higher is better), feedback from other clients (what other clients say about them), and the types of

projects that they have worked on previously. (Make sure their previously-completed projects match your project).

Another excellent indicator of a good freelancer is communication. A good freelancer asks relevant questions up front to make sure that they understand the work to be completed.

4. Not giving the freelancer all the information they need.

Once you accept their bid and hire a freelancer, you need to make sure that they have all the information that they need to begin work. This includes:

- How to contact you
- How often you want to be updated on progress
- Any server login information (if appropriate)
- When and if you will be unavailable
- All materials needed to begin work (graphics, third-party libraries, source code, text, etc.)

If the contractor does not have everything at the start, the potential for delay greatly increases.

5. Not understanding the work being developed.

If you are outsourcing a project because you are unfamiliar with the technology or type of work, make sure that the freelancer explains what they are doing and that you understand their explanation. For example, if the project is a website, make sure that you understand the libraries that they will be using and what strengths and weaknesses it has compared to other libraries.

This is also important for non-technical projects, such as SEO. Make sure you know what the SEO person is doing. An SEO consultant using black hat techniques can get your website punished by Google.

6. Not Documenting Changes

Once work begins, nearly all projects have changes in the requirements. Make sure that when changes are made to the project, that all changes are documented in writing. When communicating by phone or text, it is very easy to miss or forget what was agreed upon. After a phone or text conversation, write a quick email to summarize the conversation. This can save much confusion later when either party needs to remember what was said. By summarizing the conversation, there is something concrete to fall back on. If the conversation is not summarized, both parties can believe that they have different responsibilities.

If you are using a third-party job site, make sure that you upload the conversation to that site's workroom. If some-

thing goes wrong and the project goes to arbitration, most sites only take into account conversations that took place using their service.

7. Believing it is the freelancer's job to test software.

Many clients believe that because they are paying the freelancer, it is part of the freelancer's responsibilities to test their own work. This is correct—for unit testing. Unit testing is making sure a particular function (such as printing) is working. However, a freelancer may have no idea regarding use-case functioning—how that printing function integrates with the rest of the application. For example, there may be a common sequence of events that someone would take before printing, and a freelancer unfamiliar how the application is used might be unaware of the sequence. For this type of testing, the client is responsible. Having said this, it is the freelancer's job to test any errors that a client has pointed out. Failure of a freelancer to fix errors that have been pointed out, is something that should be addressed quickly.

8. Not giving constructive feedback.

When giving feedback, it is important that the feedback be actionable. Comments that do not contain any feedback to help the freelancer understand the issue will not help the project move forward.

Examples of poor feedback include:

- "This sucks."
- "This webpage is full of errors."
- "This design is not what I'm looking for."

When giving feedback, you need to be specific. If a webpage is producing errors, the freelancer needs to know what the exact error messages are and what browser is being used. If a graphics designer's deliverables are not what you expected, you need to explain why you don't like the work, so that the designer can understand what you are looking for.

Without proper feedback, a freelancer is working blindly. Don't respond emotionally. As an arbitrator, we have access to all communication between the parties. I've seen many good projects go bad in a span of two to three emails when one side gets insulted. When trust gets broken, it is very difficult to get it back.

9. Not thoroughly testing the work before releasing the funds.

This should go without saying, but many people release the payment to the freelancer without fully testing the work on

the assumption that anything they find later can be fixed later by the freelancer. Once you release the funds, the money is gone and there's no guarantee that the freelancer will be available to fix problems. Always thoroughly test before making the last payment.

10. Not getting the source files.

Always get the source files, even if you do not plan on making any changes. This advice goes for all software projects and all graphics projects. In arbitration, we had several cases where the client needed to make changes to the original work, but did not have the source code and could not contact the original freelancer. It is also a red flag if the source files are not available. It could mean that the freelancer is not the creator or owner of the deliverables.

If you are hiring freelancers, you want to set them up for success and not failure. By understanding where a project can fail, you will help make your project a success. Good luck.

Jim Coutu is the owner of GatorData, Inc., a software development company that develops Banner Maker Pro and Banner Maker Pro for Flash. He's online at www.gatordata.org and www.theemployersguide.com.

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Sessions, Speakers & Schedule

5-9 pm	Thursday, September 26	Registration open, at table on Paradise Terrace
7-9 pm Paradise Terrace	Thursday, September 26	Welcome Reception Hot and cold appetizers, desserts and an open bar
8am-2pm	Friday, September 27	Registration open, at table on Paradise Terrace

	Friday, September 27	Saturday, September 28	Sunday, September 29
8:00-9:00 Paradise E	Continental Breakfast	Continental Breakfast	Continental Breakfast
9:00-10:00 Paradise D	 33 High Tech Myths and How They Can Hurt You <i>Gary Elfring</i> More »	 Google AdWords - Winning the War and Making it Work <i>Aaron Weiner</i> More »	 Secondary Offer Networks <i>Mark Marrocco</i> More »
10:15-11:15 Paradise D	 Connected Apps: The New Normal <i>Leyla Seka</i> More »	 Practical Roadmap to High Performing Websites <i>Razvan Neagu</i> More »	 Be prepared. Don't let the world kick you in the assets! <i>Cheri Hill</i> More »
11:30-12:30 Paradise D	 Grow your Business to Multi-Device with Mobile & Mac <i>David i.</i> More »	 Conversations to Create More Customers <i>Jessica Dewell</i> More »	 Website Reviews: How's YOUR Website? <i>Sue, Nico & ?</i> More »
12:30-1:30 Paradise E	Buffet Lunch	Buffet Lunch	End of Conference
1:30-2:30 Paradise D	 How to Sell Software on Facebook <i>Nico Westerdale</i> More »	 The Cloud for ISVs <i>Jesse Anderson</i> More »	Reno's Biggest Little Comedy Show at the Pioneer Underground Friday or Saturday Night Tickets under \$20 Transportation Provided <i>Details coming soon</i>
2:45-3:45 Paradise D	 SEO: What Works, Digital Strategy, and a Contrarian <i>Jesse, Razvan & Jesse</i> More »	 Avoiding Problems when Hiring and Working with Freelancers <i>Jim Coutu</i> More »	
4:00-5:00 Paradise D	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	
7-9pm Terrace	Shoot Out! Games, Appetizers, Cash Bar. Friday or Saturday.		
	Friday or Saturday, Live Show Downtown -->		

More speakers may be added in the coming weeks, and speakers and events may change without notice.

Don't Build a DoorSlam!

An App is Not a Web Site

by Jerry Stern

Webmaster, Startupware.com

I've been seeing annoying apps this year. A lot of them. Really, I should install an app for Sheetz? Really? Hello, it's a gas station with hot dogs, and road-side billboards that tell me to install their app. Why? Apparently, it's an emulation of their in-store menu system. What, now I have to 'bring my own device' so that I can order a fast-food lunch? (Number of installs, per Google Play: 5,000-10,000)

McDonald's has an app. Well, an app for each country. It displays the nutrition facts for their menu items. Important: it 'works offline or in Airplane Mode.' Apparently, it's better to stuff your phone with software in anticipation of being in an airport data-free zone, than to have nutrition facts available at the ordering counter, where they're only required to be by law.

All right, most software developers aren't just selling the three major geek food groups of starch, fat, and salt in various flavors, either in gas stations or airports. We have programs and web sites that deliver either information or services, online or offline, and few of us are shipping sandwiches by cell phone. For those of you do who create these corporate apps, congratulations on using the raw power of the internet and the mobile data network to deliver a message that could have been handled with a sign on the wall. Hopefully, your Apps are not being pushed onto every mobile visitor, with popups and encouragements to nag mobile visitors into accepting yet another app on their devices, which seemed to have so much memory when they were new, but are now getting, well, crowded.

Among other sites using apps as websites, for no reason I can determine, are these sites that have been encouraging you to download their app as soon as you arrive (mobile-style) on their web sites:

- RottenTomatoes.com
- TheFreeDictionary.com
- Flickr.com
- Forbes.com
- LinkedIn.com
- Tumblr.com



Some online blogs are calling these sites and apps *doorslams*. It's the online equivalent of the bank greeter who stops you at the door, and tries to transact your confidential bank transaction on a clipboard in the middle of the lobby. Or worse, it's the bouncer who says you aren't cool enough to enter the dive of your choice.

Why the Doorslam?

Well, it's cool to be mobile right now, beyond all common sense. Even Microsoft has fallen into the trap of counting smart phones as if they were computers. They aren't. A miniature horse is not for riding, and a Russian Wolfhound is neither a lap dog nor a wolf. Similarly, a smart phone may sometimes be used like a desktop computer, but mostly, it's not, and forcing any mobile visitor to go to an App, when they just opened your site in Chrome or Safari, is adding road blocks and detours to visitors. Duh, if I opened Safari, and typed in your web address, don't make me surf over to the Apple Store, download, update, and then forget why I was visiting. Or just as bad, I will reject your app because I may not have either the device memory to handle one more app, or the energy to wait through all the future updates of yet another app on my phone. Grab my visit while I'm there, and never send me off-site. Hang onto your visitors.

But a phone's screen is too small! No, a phone's screen is not always inferior to a screen on a computer. There are netbooks like the Acer EEE PC 900SD, with 8 Gb of SSD storage and 512 Mb of memory, running Windows XP on a 9" screen. There is a 6.44" phablet (phone/tablet) coming out shortly from Sony—it will be the 'Xperia Z Ultra', for those of you who just have to have it—and the screen resolution, at 1920 x 1090, will be higher than that on the 9" neotebook. For that matter, an iPad Mini has a screen resolution of 1024 x 768, and while not spectacular by modern comparisons with the new version of the Google Nexus 7 at 1920 x 1200, all these devices easily surpass the old Asus 9" netbook, at 1024 x 600. But there are no App installs

pushed at netbook users.

We sell algorithms that do fun stuff or useful stuff, and that can be deliverable program code (software), downloadable mobile code (Apps), web code (SAAS, software-as-a-service), or the simpler version of that, web sites with embedded intelligence and programming. I'll arbitrarily label them all as software products.

For any given software product, there is a best delivery method. Best is subjective; there's best for the consumer of the product, and best for the software developer. Well, we're biased—as developers, we want visitors to visit our sites longer, and use our online applications more. These sites and online products could be apps. They could be mobile (.mobi) web sites. Or they could be responsive sites, where the web site detects the display size in use, and adjusts font sizes and column counts and widths as-needed to fit the device. (See the February 2013 and October 2012 ASPECTS for more on responsive sites.)

Why use an app?

An app may make sense if the program or web site needs to be usable where no data connection exists, or no data connection is permitted. Mapping qualifies, especially off-road. Hospital rooms with cardiac monitoring systems can't use wireless connections. Military sites with a 'no data in or out' policy may restrict or jam service.

Maybe some file-based applications deserve to be apps. If there's data that can't or shouldn't be saved on the web or in a cloud, an app might be the best approach.

Why use a Responsive website?

Responsive designs are faster to create than an app. Faster to fix. That makes them cheaper to deploy, and an update is like any other website update, with no trips through the Apple AppStore or the Google Play Store. With a responsive theme for WordPress, including the new default theme 'Twenty Thirteen' in WordPress 3.6, any site is ready for mobile visitors without the double or triple work of creating multiple websites or apps for Android, iPad, and Microsoft phones.

These sites can automatically be 'cloud' services if your server package is cloud-based and multi-server, and even if it's just on a single server, it still 'synchronizes' user data between multiple devices. That's because it's still a web site, but one that adapts, on-the-fly, to the width and resolution of the web-browsing gadget in-use. Set it up, once. Done.

How about Mobi?

I have occasionally found mobile web sites, because I've gone looking for something.COM while using a smartphone, and was redirected into something.MOBI.

While I haven't found them often enough to find them annoying, at least I haven't had to go through pop-ups pushing me to downloads that aren't on the site I'm visiting. Would I recommend building one of these sites? No, not now; that time has passed. Responsive sites are easy enough to build now, using standard templates, that there really is no longer a reason to split off your traffic by screen size, with all the page rank losses and double maintenance that leads to. Could there be an exception? Yes, for very large products or sites.

Be aware: Google has an official stance on mobi pages, and on these doorslams. It's not good. (*See the link, below.*)

Decisions

I'm lazy. I really like creating my content and online resources just one time. A responsive site lets me do that. For that, I give up some flexibility in the page design. I lose the ability to actually know if a visitor will see a one-column layout, or two, or three, when they visit my sites; it's adjustable, and that's OK.

A website, or a service, whenever it can function as online code, is just so easy to keep multi-device and multi-platform friendly as a responsive site that it makes very little sense to build multiple apps to support and download.

Even subscription services can be done as responsive sites now; there are services that will manage the subscription for you, and it's no longer necessary to sell these services as something in an app store.

However, a complex program or anything that really must have offline capability, in my opinion, should be still be downloadable software, either as a program or as an app—nothing changes when a product is a massive power tool.

And doorslams? Don't annoy your visitors; let them surf as they arrive, and don't send them to app stores—they may be tempted by today's top time-waster app, and not come back.

Resources:

Changes in rankings of smartphone search results
http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/changes-in-rankings-of-smartphone_11.html

Sheetz: App for your Appetite; Academic - Ad Campaign
<http://www.behance.net/gallery/App-For-Your-Appetite/921010>

Responsive Web Design
<http://responsivedesign.ca/>

Jerry Stern is the editor of ASPECTS, and the webmaster for many sites, some responsive, and some that will be. Real soon now. His (responsive) blog is at www.startupware.com

How to Get an Ultimate Perspective on Your Business

by Jiri Novotny
Founder, Dextronet

The best way to quickly gain a tremendous perspective on your business is to create a visual model of it.

I don't mean "business model" in the usual sense. By "visual model of your business", I mean a diagram that maps all the moving parts of your business. For example, here is what a model of our business looks like (*below*).

The five main categories at the top are Products, Marketing & Sales, People, Systems, and Company. These five main categories work well for most businesses, but what you list under them depends on your current business situation. (By the way, I recommend that you create a complex complete model first, and then simplify it.)

In our case, this is what I included:

Under Products, I've listed our current products and their most important planned new features, as well as our website (I think of it as a product) and its main parts.

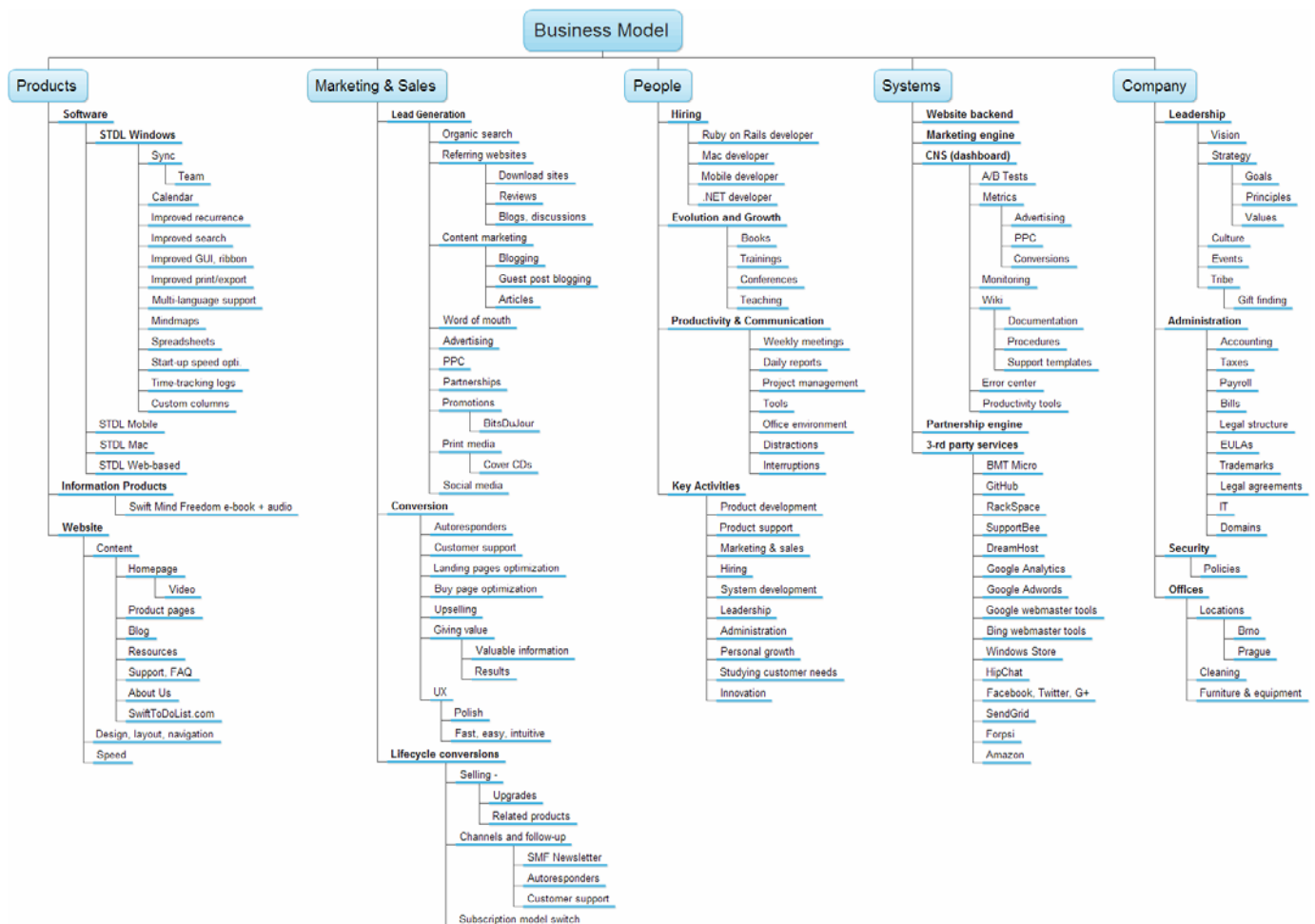
Under Marketing & Sales, I listed Lead Generation, and

under it, I listed all the lead sources: Organic search, referring websites, content marketing, word of mouth, advertising, PPC, partnerships, online promotions, print media and social media. I then break down some of these further.

Still under Marketing & Sales, I also listed Conversion (autoresponders, customer support, landing pages optimization, buy page optimization, upselling, giving value and education and results, UX). I also listed Lifecycle Conversions (selling upgrades, selling related products, monthly newsletter, autoresponders, customer support, switch to subscription model).

Under People, the categories are hiring, training and learning, productivity and communication, key activities. Under key activities, I listed product development, product support, marketing and sales, hiring, internal tools and systems development, leadership, administration, learning and personal growth, studying customer needs, innovation.

Then in the Systems main category, I listed all our



internal systems and tools (such as our website backend administration, our build server, our marketing engine, our internal dashboard). I also listed all the external systems and services that we use (the hosting company, payment processor, Google analytics, SendGrid, and many more).

In the Company main category, I listed leadership (vision, strategy, goals, values, culture, events), administration (accounting, taxes, payroll, bills, legal structure, EULAs, trademarks, legal agreements, IT maintenance, internet domains), security (policies), offices (locations, cleaning, maintenance, furniture and furnishing).

You could also include the “Market” as one of the main categories to map the current trends in your market.

So, now that you have an idea how such “visual model of your business” could look like, you can create a similar visual diagram of your business in just an hour or so. I really like “Edraw Mind Map” software for this. You can download it at <http://www.edrawsoft.com/freemind.php> - I am currently not affiliated with EdrawSoft, I just like their product because it's super easy to use. It comes with multiple templates—the one I used was called “Project Timeline” (what you will be creating is of course not a timeline).

When you create such a model of your business, it can be extremely enlightening and profitable for you. The model serves multiple purposes:

- 1) It gives you a high level perspective
- 2) It allows you to reveal hidden opportunities
- 3) It helps you to manage complexity

High level perspective

Having the high level perspective makes it much easier to focus on what really matters. In your daily business operation, it's very easy to lose track of the big picture. (Not see the forest for the trees.)

Additionally, it makes decision making easier. It gives you the right perspective for all your long-term decisions.

I guarantee you that if you create the visual model of your business today and start thinking about it, then in five years, your business will be much better off than it would've been if you didn't have this perspective and map for making solid long-term decisions.

Managing complexity

Your business is a tremendously complex system. It has hundreds, if not thousands, of moving parts and elements that affect its performance and ultimately the bottom line.

Trying to keep track of all these moving parts is mentally very taxing. Even writing it all down is not sufficient—

such notes, if complete, are inevitably very complex (if not downright confusing and chaotic). Fortunately, having a visual model that clearly shows the relationships between the components solves this challenge.

Revealing hidden opportunities

All systems have bottlenecks and leverage points. Your business is a system, and the model gives you a map of that system. By looking at the map, you can find such opportunities for improvement. You can get unique insights. You really need to try this yourself.

Look for two things—bottlenecks, and leverage points.

Bottlenecks are the areas that cripple your business and ultimately block the profits. They represent the “friction”, the deadweights.

Leverage points are areas that provide incredible ROI when developed further.

All business owners dream of doing that one simple tweak which will increase your profits overnight by 30%. Such tweaks exist—and the easiest way to find them is to go to a coffee shop, look at the model of your business, and contemplate it.

For example, by contemplating the model, you might realize that your product and website is great, but you don't engage and sell to your existing customers enough. Or, you might realize that you are wasting time by blogging, and the time would be spent better by creating that mobile app your customers are asking for. Or, you might realize that you really need to hire someone to handle the email for you.

Simply put, you will get great insights that you will be able to execute on.

Final thought—if you work with other people in your business (co-founders, employees, contractors or partners), it can often be very helpful to show the model of your business to them and explain it to them. That way, they can understand the business better and also make better decisions. You could also create a simplified version for this purpose.

You can even show and explain the model to your spouse or mother—perhaps she (or he) would finally understand what you are actually doing! If not, well, at least you will look like a genius.

But really, go create the model. I guarantee you that you will be glad you did.

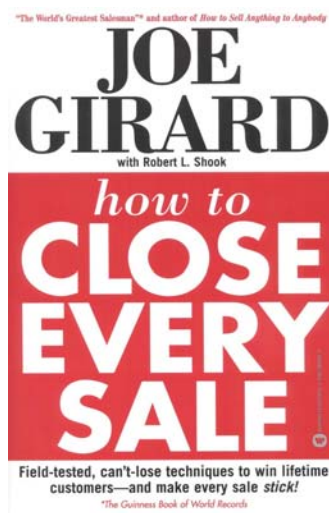
Jiri Novotny is the founder of www.dextronet.com and author of Swift To-Do List, the number one task and notes organizer for Windows. If you need a powerful list view control for .NET WinForms, then check out Better ListView at www.componentowl.com/better-listview

Own the Software Sales Process

by Al Harberg

the Software Marketing Glossary guy

Take charge of the sales process if you expect to close a sale. That advice comes from Joe Girard, the world's greatest salesman according to The Guinness Book of World Records. Much of the advice in Girard's book How to Close Every Sale can be translated from Girard's experience with face-to-face automobile sales into the realm of selling software on the Internet.



Write a powerful sales message.

Your sales presentation, according to Girard, needs to be crafted carefully. You can't simply cut and paste some information from a press release or from the software write-ups that you've submitted to the download sites. You'll sell a lot more software if you design and copywrite your sales message for your website visitors.

If you're targeting more than one audience, then develop a sales presentation for each niche in which you're trying to build market share.

Software developers need to weave important ideas into the body of their sales presentation, so prospects will be thinking about these ideas as they learn more about the benefits of the software. For example, most microISVs could significantly increase their incomes if they sold more multi-user and site licenses. Yet the vast majority of developers don't talk about the benefits of installing their software on every computer in the enterprise. Instead, developers have one-liners on their "buy now" pages that invite prospects to email them for information about multi-user discounts.

If you want an office manager to think about running your productivity software on each of his or her employees' computers, then you need to promote this idea, early and often. If an entrepreneur or a corporate line manager reaches your "buy now" page with the notion that they're ready to make a \$25 purchase, and you spring the idea of a \$500 25-seat license on them, they're not going to be prepared to make the larger purchase. You need to weave the idea of a multi-user license into your entire sales presentation.

Empathy sells software.

Girard urges us to tell our prospects that we understand them. Convince prospects that you have their best interests at heart, and that you want to help them make the right decision. If prospects believe that you're sincere, they'll be much more eager to buy your software.

If you're marketing educational software to parents, for example, then point out that you, too, have children. Make prospects understand that you're aware of the responsibility involved with selecting educational programs for their youngsters.

If you sell accounting software for entrepreneurs, then explain that you needed an application to solve a problem in your own firm, and that you developed your program because there was nothing in the marketplace that addressed this business need.

If you're offering games or home entertainment software, then say that you understand the need to wind down and relax after a stressful day at work. Tell prospects that everyone deserves to own a fun application that brings them pleasure.

No matter whom you're targeting with your sales message, tell prospects that you understand their need to buy software like the application that you're marketing.

Sell with authority.

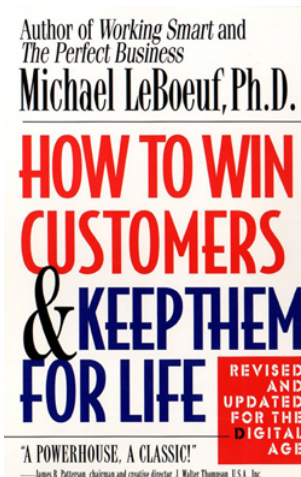
Girard tells us to act with authority when we're selling our products or services. Don't be arrogant. But make it clear that the person who wrote your website knows what he or she is talking about. People respect expertise, and they want to deal with a professional.

Create an "about" page on your website that talks about the number of years that you've been marketing software. Talk about your IT experience. And mention any business credentials that will enhance your credibility.

Sell with emotion.

Sell "ideals, feelings, self-respect, home life, and happiness." So says Michael LeBoeuf, the author of the book How to Win Customers and Keep Them for Life.

LeBoeuf, like just about everybody who writes about the sales process, believes that people buy with emotion, and justify their purchase with



logic. Your home page and product page have to present a logical case for buying your application. But you also need to add some emotion into the mix.

We have to sell solutions to problems, and not just goods or services. If you solve a business problem, then make your prospect feel the annoyance of continuing to struggle with the problem. Suggest that many of their competitors have already bought your software, and that these competitors are able to solve problems that your prospect cannot currently solve.

People don't buy what you sell. They buy the benefits of what you sell. It boils down to the old advice, "Don't sell the steak, sell the sizzle." Too many software developers continue to talk too much about features on their websites, and barely mention benefits.

"Your company may sell the finest products and services in the marketplace," LeBoeuf reminds us, "but it's how customers feel about your products and services that ultimately determines how successful your business will be."

LeBoeuf urges us to remember that prospects buy for their own reasons, and not for ours. For example, you may not be a particularly risk-averse person, but many of your customers might be. So offer a money-back guarantee. Show them testimonials from happy customers. Take away their fears and you'll sell more software.

Sell with urgency.

To further increase your software sales, your website needs to foster a sense of urgency. Encourage prospects to buy immediately.

ASP Member News

Powerful, Affordable RAR Repair Software

DataNumen has released DataNumen RAR Repair version 2, a powerful Windows utility that repairs corrupted or damaged RAR files. Using advanced proprietary technologies to scan the damaged RAR archives, DataNumen RAR Repair recovers as many files as possible and minimizes data loss due to file corruption. The software works with all versions of WinRAR archive files.

DataNumen RAR Repair includes all of the features that business people expect in a professional data recovery application. The software supports all versions of RAR and SFX files, and can comfortably process password-protected archives.

DataNumen RAR Repair is fully integrated with Windows Explorer, allowing users to right-click an archive and access the repair software immediately from the context menu. Drag and drop operations are supported, along with command-line batch processing.
www.datanumen.com/rar-repair/

Making it easy for a customer to add your website's URL to their web browser's "favorites" list makes the immediate sale seem less urgent. It tells prospects that it's okay to go away and think about possibly purchasing your application at a later time. Few prospects will return to your site to complete the sale.

Offering a time-sensitive discount is a technique that can encourage immediate sales. I've seen this technique executed badly, though. Don't use cookies and javascript to make it seem that your prospect was lucky enough to land on your product page on the last day of a 25-percent-off sale. Many prospects will figure out that the so-called sale is fake. And people won't buy from you if they don't trust you.

Sell your software.

The final step of the sales process is selling your software. Most developers, however, believe that the final step in the process is getting the prospect to download their trial version. It's unlikely that your conversion rate will significantly exceed the software development industry standard of one percent. It's hard to put your children through college if 99 percent of your website visitors don't make an immediate decision to buy. Encourage the sale, and not the download.

Since 1984, Al Harberg has been helping software developers write press releases and send them to the editors. You can check out his Software Marketing Blog on <http://www.software-marketing-blog.com/>

Popular "Allmyapps" Windows App Store to be based on PAD® v4.0

The highly popular Allmyapps desktop client software, which features a Windows Application Store of highly popular software apps with several million active users, has announced that they will be basing their catalog on the ASP PAD 4.0 Specification.

"We are very selective about both the apps and the content of the apps that we include in our catalog. The superior PAD v4.0 platform will not only offer powerful POLLING support from the Official PAD Repository, but will allow our catalog to be auto update directly from the publisher and benefit from professional validation and verification by the staff of AppVisor and the PAD v4.0 review process" said Allmyapps CEO, Thibaud Favre.

By endorsing PAD V4.0 support as it's official content source, Allmyapps and its millions of users will benefit from many of the newer content features of the v4.0

specification including: video, social network links, improved security and instant updating of publisher application's content to ensure that the latest versions of listings are available.

Publishers who wish to submit their products as part of the Allmyapps App Store can submit their software via registering on the AppVisor.com and publishing their PAD file on the AppVisor platform.

allmyapps.com

News & Press Corner

Amazon Appstore Now Accepting HTML5 Web Apps

Making It Easy for Developers to Reach Millions of Kindle Fire and Android Customers Worldwide

HTML5 web apps can now be discovered, downloaded, installed and used in the Amazon Appstore providing better opportunities for developers to make money

Amazon today launched web app support in the Mobile App Distribution Program. Developers can now submit URLs for their HTML5 web apps and mobile websites and have Amazon offer that content to millions of Kindle Fire and Amazon Appstore customers in the same, convenient way as native apps. Developers can submit and distribute mobile web content without using third-party software or doing any native app development, and they can take advantage of Amazon's In-App Purchasing API for JavaScript, which provides them the option to build sales of digital goods into their apps. Customers can find great new web apps in the Amazon Appstore today, including Dream Pet Link from Spil Games, and IGN Video Game Reviews, News & Previews from IGN Entertainment. Developers can get started with the Amazon Mobile App Distribution Program by visiting <https://developer.amazon.com/appstore>.

Web developers and content publishers have historically faced numerous challenges when building, optimizing and distributing web apps for mobile devices. Previously, third party software was needed to convert mobile web content to native apps to participate in an appstore, and on-device debugging was a challenging and necessary prerequisite for achieving strong performance on a large variety of web runtimes. Amazon is removing these roadblocks by providing the following benefits:

Easy distribution through the Amazon Appstore: Developers submit URLs and metadata for their HTML5 web apps and mobile websites directly to the Amazon Mobile App Distribution Portal. Amazon distributes the mobile web content through the Amazon Appstore to millions of Amazon customers using Kindle Fire and Android devices in nearly 200 countries.

Strong web app performance on Kindle Fire: Developers

benefit from native-like experiences on Kindle Fire with a new, faster web runtime, based on the open-source Chromium project. The runtime supports the latest HTML5 features and includes standards-based extensions enabling developers to build a web app once and deploy it across multiple platforms without requiring platform specific changes. In addition, the new runtime includes web developer tools enabling on-device debugging on Kindle Fire.

"We've heard from developers that making their web apps available for mobile devices is hard because many times it means rewriting their app, which takes extra time and often requires third party tools," said Mike George, Vice President of Amazon Appstore, Games and Cloud Drive. "By launching support for HTML5 web apps in the Mobile App Distribution Program, we're giving web developers the tools they need and all the benefits that native apps already enjoy in the Amazon Appstore and on Kindle Fire. This opens up new possibilities—starting with faster discovery, access to tools for increased monetization, and the ability to reach new customers for greater exposure."

Today's launch of web app support in the Amazon Appstore is the latest offering in an array of services that make Amazon the most complete end-to-end ecosystem for developers building, monetizing and marketing their apps and games.

Amazon Appstore submission for distribution to nearly 200 countries globally enables developers to reach millions more Amazon customers worldwide.

Amazon Launches Mobile Associates API

Expands In-App Purchasing to Millions of Physical Products on Amazon.com for Kindle Fire and the Amazon Appstore

App developers can now become Amazon Associates and sell millions of products from Amazon.com, creating new monetization opportunities within their apps and games

Amazon today introduced the Mobile Associates API for Kindle Fire and other Android devices, enabling developers to merchandise millions of physical and digital items from Amazon.com within their apps and games. When using the new API, developers earn up to 6% on qualifying in-app customer purchases while providing customers an opportunity to easily buy and receive goods through Amazon's secure 1-Click purchase experience and Amazon Prime shipping, where available. Until today, if developers wanted to create additional revenue channels for their apps they could use a "freemium" model with digital in-app purchasing or subscriptions, or by using mobile ads. With the Mobile Associates API, developers now have a new way to monetize their apps and games by offering contextually relevant goods across Amazon's world class physical

fulfillment network. The API can be used in the Amazon Appstore and in Google Play.

“Developers now have the ability to create an even deeper connection between their app and the products customers value and purchase through Amazon.com,” said Mike George, Vice President of Amazon Appstore, Games and Cloud Drive. “Imagine a developer of a nutrition and fitness app can now offer their customers the ability to purchase vitamins, supplements and fitness gear within the app, directly from Amazon.com. It offers the customer a more relevant experience and provides the developer with a new source of revenue.”

App and game developers as well as existing Amazon Associates can create new and compelling user experiences within apps and games in three ways: selling a single item from within an app or game, showcasing a category of goods, or bundling the purchase of physical goods with the purchase of digital goods (for example, the customer receives a digital version of a board game when they buy the physical one). Animoca, Fismos, Days of Wonder and Spring2Partners are already integrating these experiences within their popular apps and games.

<https://developer.amazon.com/post/Tx1IHGY6BIA4ZWM/Announcing-the-Amazon-Mobile-Associates-API-Earn-Advertising-Fees-by-Selling-Pro>

Moving forward

Aug. 23, 2013: Text of an internal email from Microsoft chief executive officer Steve Ballmer to employees regarding his plan to retire.

I am writing to let you know that I will retire as CEO of Microsoft within the next 12 months, after a successor is chosen. There is never a perfect time for this type of transition, but now is the right time. My original thoughts on timing would have had my retirement happen in the middle of our transformation to a devices and services company focused on empowering customers in the activities they value most. We need a CEO who will be here longer term for this new direction. You can read the press release on Microsoft News Center.

This is a time of important transformation for Microsoft. Our new Senior Leadership team is amazing. The strategy we have generated is first class. Our new organization, which is centered on functions and engineering areas, is right for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Microsoft is an amazing place. I love this company. I love the way we helped invent and popularize computing and the PC. I love the bigness and boldness of our bets. I love our people and their talent and our willingness to accept and embrace their range of capabilities, including their quirks. I love the way we embrace and work with other companies to change the world and succeed together. I love the breadth and diversity of our customers, from consumer to enterprise, across industries, countries, and people of all backgrounds and age groups.

I am proud of what we have achieved. We have grown from \$7.5 million to nearly \$78 billion since I joined Microsoft, and we have grown from employing just over 30 people to almost 100,000. I feel good about playing a role in that success and having committed 100 percent emotionally all the way. We have more than 1 billion users and earn a great profit for our shareholders. We have delivered more profit and cash return to shareholders than virtually any other company in history.

I am excited by our mission of empowering the world and believe in our future success. I cherish my Microsoft ownership, and look forward to continuing as one of Microsoft's largest owners.

This is an emotional and difficult thing for me to do. I take this step in the best interests of the company I love; it is the thing outside of my family and closest friends that matters to me most.

Microsoft has all its best days ahead. Know you are part of the best team in the industry and have the right technology assets. We cannot and will not miss a beat in these transitions. I am focused and driving hard and know I can count on all of you to do the same. Let's do ourselves proud.

Steve

<http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/news/press/2013/aug13/08-23AnnouncementPR.aspx> August 28, 2013

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