Promoting Information Technology Growth

Technology First
Supporting Information Technology Growth

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Technology First Leadership Awards

Big Data Calls for Smart Networks

Winners

LEADERSHIP AWARD EVENT

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The Technology First Leadership awards were created in 2013 to acknowledge the contribution of information technology professionals ensuring a vibrant Dayton community. Eligible nominees could be individuals or teams exemplifying Technology First's mission which is to create a community to share knowledge, learn new skills, grow business, and explore the future.

On Thursday, May 15th at the Flight Deck at the University of Dayton Arena, Technology First hosted a celebration of those nominees' contributions with their first Leadership Awards event. The night came together with a lot of excitement with nearly 110 professionals attending including the who’s who of the Dayton IT Community.

The planning committee had begun working on creating the concept for the awards and developing aspects of the event in September 2013. Members of the committee included:

- Tom Skill, CIO for the University of Dayton
- Phil Bergstedt, Senior Architect, GE Aviation
- John Huelsman, IT Director, Business Support Services, Hobart Service
- Barbara Hayde, President of the Entrepreneurs Center

Upon guests’ arrival, the networking hour included appetizers, cocktails, and lots of speculation on who would win. Larry Hansgen, Sports Director for WHIO Radio acted as emcee for the evening and kicked off the event with stories about his own experiences with and lack of knowledge about technology. He soon introduced the Keynote Speaker for the evening - Mark Adams, Vice President Client Success for Lighthouse Technologies.

Mark Adams, also an ESPN college basketball analyst and former championship college basketball coach. During his presentation, Mark Adams, provided humorous stories from his personal experiences and brought inspirational insight into leadership and values important to life. His keynote presentation was followed by the announcements of the winners. The nominees for each category were introduced through a short video featuring responses to questions asked about aspects of the category and the intent of the awards. The sponsor of each category then announced and congratulated the winner. They included:

- Emerging Leader Winner
  Hanen Alkhafaji, PQ Systems
  Announced by Mark Romito, ATT

- Outstanding Technology Team Winner
  Lion
  Announced by Don Kennedy, twTelecomm
LEADERSHIP AWARDS, CONT.

Community Advocate Winner
Tim Hull, Bitstorm Web
Announced by Barbara Hayde,
The Entrepreneurs Center

Best IT Services Company Winner
Lighthouse Technologies
Announced by Diana Tullio,
Standard Register

IT Executive of the Year Winner
Steve Hangen
Announced by Steve Griffen, SIS

The Judges

The winners were decided by judges who were selected by members of the planning committee. The judges spent many hours reviewing the responses and deliberating over the winners.

Beth Whelley
Senior Vice President,
Fahlgren Mortine

Colonel Donald R. Grannan
USAF Commander (CIO),
88th Communications Group,
Wright Patterson Air Force Base

Colonel Grannan and his wife Lorraine were able to attend the event.

Greg Hasselbeck
Chief Technology Officer,
GE Aviation

A Big Thank You! to our SPONSORS!
Initial feedback from those attending the event thought the evening was fun and the purpose behind the awards was worthwhile. The planning committee will continue to gather feedback but it is beginning to look like the event will be back in the future.
Best IT Services Company Winner: Lighthouse Technologies

Describe the IT services that your company provides.

Our IT services comprise of two distinct practices: software testing and Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) consulting. Our software testing practice consists of offerings such as custom app testing, full-scale test outsourcing, and test automation, while our Oracle EBS offerings include scalable consulting, support-and-maintenance outsourcing, and test automation with Oracle Application Testing Suite (Oracle OATS).

Describe the endeavor (product / service) that was undertaken. What was done and for what purpose? Describe aspects of the undertaking such as challenges overcome or team collaboration?

Approximately 18 months ago, we made the decision to make a companywide change regarding our marketing/sales strategy: instead of relying on previous relationships for new opportunities, we would become a sales and marketing-driven organization offering value-based services. We realized that the only way to truly grow our business from here on out was to target businesses we thought we could help rather than the ones that were in our existing network.

Making such a bold move was a leap of faith: it required more than doubling our Sales and Marketing staff—a sizable investment for a company of 65. Getting complete buy-in wasn’t easy, but in the end we remained faithful that the gamble would pay off, staying mindful of the fact that a larger sales staff would mean more opportunities for Lighthouse.

At the same time, we also made a conscious decision to focus both on what we were selling and to whom we’re selling to. We organized our services into three tiers, starting with two high-value offerings at the top: 1) test automation for Oracle EBS, offering significant cost and time savings, and 2) Rural Software Testing, an alternative to offshore outsourcing which offers certified, hardworking, Dayton-based testing talent at a total cost that’s comparable to offshore vendors. As tier-one offerings, these two services are promoted the most heavily by our sales and marketing team, while the less-promoted offerings (tiers two and three) serve as alternatives to then be sold if the tier-one services aren’t
needed by the target company. At the same time, we identified the market segments in which we could provide the most value. By leveraging this focused sales and marketing strategy, our team is more efficient—as we have a more clearly-defined target market to sell to and tailored offerings designed to appeal to them.

By offering a host of solutions that can all cater to one specific group, we're increasing our likelihood of landing profitable business. This sets us up for sustainable, long-term growth—a strategy that not only ensures a successful future for ourselves, but also for the people we employ, the clients we serve, and the city we call home.

**Describe the number of jobs that resulted this year and how many are located in the Dayton region. What percentage of revenue growth was realized this year as a result of your efforts?**

Due in large part to our new sales and marketing strategy, we have experienced significant growth. Since the beginning of 2013, we've hired over 16 employees, and opened a satellite office in Atlanta, Georgia, and over the last three years we've experienced a 3-year revenue growth of 471 percent—resulting in us being named to the Inc. 5000 list of the “Fastest Growing Private Companies in America” for the second consecutive year. We were ranked as the #1 Software Services company in Ohio, as well as #927 across the US (in all categories). In addition, we anticipate making the Inc 5000 again this year. Our continued ranking stands as a testament to the fact that we're not just doing well in the short term, but instead sustainably growing. We're not using any outside funding to accelerate our growth; we're doing the same thing we've always done—offering our clients high-value services that save them time and money.

**Describe the personal and financial investment made to increase the capacity / footprint of the organization.**

In addition to our investment in sales and marketing, Lighthouse has contributed millions of dollars in payroll over the last three years. We see it as an investment in our employees and in the Dayton community. We provide job security, benefits, and raises to our employees while offering high-value services to our clients that allow them to save money while delivering their goods faster.

Our commitment to growth isn’t merely numbers-driven, either. At Lighthouse, we feel a personal drive to not merely succeed, but flourish. As we grow, so too do our resources; enhancing our staff, their work environment, and the quantity and quality of the services we offer. We feel that through sustainable growth, we’ll avoid the challenges so frequently experienced by companies that expand too quickly, putting us in an ideal position to better serve our clients and employees.

**Describe how your personal efforts are helping ensure that Dayton remains a vibrant community?**

To see the most salient example of our commitment to Dayton, you need to look no further than the aforementioned “tier-one” offerings that we chose to focus our sales and marketing strategy upon. While both offerings do offer tremendous value to prospective clients, they also do an invaluable service to the area: driving career opportunities across a host of different walks of life. While our test automation services for Oracle EBS will spur job creation for college-educated professionals in the area, our Rural Software Testing will go even further—offering opportunities to not just those with a collegiate degree, but also to retooled workers seeking a new career. Through a partnership with a local college, we're able to offer training, certification, and a viable career path at Lighthouse. This offering extends an opportunity to both college students and retooled workers alike—whether it’s a stay-at-home mom looking for a part-time job, an out-of-work factory worker looking for a new career, or someone else entirely—to find their calling.

In essence, we aim to enhance the livelihood of those that depend upon us. Whether it’s creating a supportive corporate culture or offering better services to our clients, our company’s success isn’t just measured by the profit margins we attain, but by the satisfaction of the people we serve. We’ve been a Dayton-based company ever since our inception, and that’s something we take great pride in. From the local charities we support (a company strategic initiative—right alongside making a profit) to the multiple boards our President and CEO sits on to promote technology in the region; everything we do is an effort to support our hometown. With every person we hire, every dollar we make, and every single thing we do to grow our business, we help bring more people, jobs, and wealth into the Gem City.
LVI is the military support business unit of LION and focused on customized, scalable lifecycle management and supply chain solutions for the military, DoD and government agencies. A primary concern is to improve the readiness of America’s warfighters, while continually reducing costs. As part of that mission, the service branches of the US military have a need for superior security from end-to-end in all electronic systems. The Defense Information Assurance Certification and Accreditation Process (DIACAP) is a rigid set of standards that apply to all aspects of data collection, transmission and storage. No commercial vendor had been able to meet the rigid standards needed to become DIACAP certified across all of those areas. LVI had a desire to be able to offer that high level of security like no other company had ever delivered and began working toward that end.

Describe the results and how efficiency, productivity or performance was improved.

The project was built to address processes, hardware, networking and finally software changes.

PROCESS:
Workshop sessions were conducted with several different groups of customers, and process changes were created for every warehouse location as well as the corporate location. Process changes were mapped through the operation’s workflows to ensure the new designs would enhance operations productivity. Technical teams advised operations of hardware and software system concerns and developed new architectures to overcome system limitations.

HARDWARE:
Workshop sessions had revealed that LVI required the ability to stand up groups of servers very rapidly in order to support the needs of military customers. Adding servers is a costly and time-consuming process that did not serve the mission of LVI. Server virtualization from VMware was the answer to both the cost and time constraint problems. Server teams worked to architect a standard template that would allow LVI the ability to stand up a customer specific solution in days rather than months. The reduction of servers also lowered the cost of operations substantially for new business.

NETWORKING:
The rapid expansion possibility that had been enabled by using VMware server virtualization was identified as a critical risk by the networking team. Massive amounts of data between new server farms could overload existing WAN systems and adding capacity would be a costly choice. Lowering costs for our customers is a primary part of our mission and so the networking team was tasked with solving the need for rapid expansion while lowering costs. A Citrix remote connectivity solution was architected and put in place to solve the issues. The remote system substantially lowered the data requirements between sites and was able to be expanded quickly to low bandwidth locations. The solution even opened up possibilities like cellular routing and being able to support operations at deployed field locations with no permanent infrastructure.

SOFTWARE:
The networking and hardware solutions were identified and started and the software team embarked on an intense development period. LVI has always believed that following established best practices and using commercially available, best-of-breed systems results in better reliability, streamlined operations and lower costs. The suite of software tools in use required test and release iterations to ensure changes to system configurations were optimized for use as well as new security restrictions. Additional effort was taken to ensure system integrations were capable of achieving the new security restrictions and still operate as needed. Multiple tester were engaged during the project including technical staff from the ERP, Website and Support Desk teams.

OUTCOME:
The final outcome was a project that allowed LVI to become DIACAP certified across the spectrum of supported activities. This certification has allowed LVI to expand current business and look to new opportunities. As a result of this certification, the Marine Corps Logistics Command (LOGCOM) awarded all remaining elements of the Consolidated Storage Program (CSP) to LVI. With recent contract additions, LVI will now manage all chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear equipment, and all soft-walled shelters and camouflage, in addition to infantry combat equipment and special training pool gear. LVI will be accountable for the management of more than $2.5 billion in Marine Corps assets. The changes optimized LVI processes so well that during the CSP expansion, all 12 new locations were operational with completely new processes and systems in under 30 days.

Describe aspects of the undertaking such as team collaboration or challenges overcome.

LION began working on the DIACAP project from various perspectives. Teams of IT resources partnered with the business units to ensure that all changes would harmonize in a way that completed the security goal as well as reduce complexity within the existing business. Since no other company had ever taken on this challenge, there was no roadmap or toolset that could lead the way. LION put together a team of resources from across every area of the company to ensure all elements converged toward one goal.

Describe how your personal efforts are helping ensure that Dayton remains a vibrant community.

LION has been a staple in the Dayton area. For over 100 years, LION has partnered with Dayton and the surrounding area with programs for the arts, technology and employment. The DIACAP project offers LION the ability to grow the business and continue to offer high value STEM jobs for our community.
Big Data Calls for Smart Networks

By: Sosheel Samuel, VP, IT Infrastructure and Operations, tw telecom

The term “Big Data” entered the mainstream in the last decade to describe not only the massive amount of information that has been captured from many sources, but also the processes and software that have been developed to review, manipulate, visualize, and analyze the data.

Analysts in sectors from healthcare, to meteorology, to finance require tremendous amounts of computing power to mine information found in huge fixed field, relational data bases, as well as data from devices such as smart meters and sensors, in order to model their industries and fields. Additionally, social media interactions and mobile apps continually generate unstructured data that can be used, for example, to explore business trends and consumer behavior and ultimately guide business decision-making.

Thanks to data centers, Cloud storage options, and the availability of exceptional service partners, Big Data isn’t just for big companies anymore. Whether their “big” is defined in gigabytes or petabytes, organizations of all sizes now have cost-effective opportunities to acquire, store, analyze, and leverage Big Data to strategically plan and grow.

However, discussions about Big Data often miss one critical element: optimally exploiting it requires horizontal server-to-server high performance networks that can reliably access and process the data. Without a robust, scalable, and secure network link to Big Data and its related applications, Big Data can be a Big Headache... and tapping into it might just be a Big Dream.

What critical network features should you look for so that you can make Big Data work for you?

1.) Scalability – Not too many companies continuously send or retrieve extremely high amounts of data. Loads fluctuate and the need for maximum bandwidth is the exception, not the norm. Unfortunately, companies too often are forced to pay for these maximum bandwidth levels 24/7/365 when they only are needed, say, 01/7/365 or maybe even 03/01/52. Ideally, you want a network solution that allows you to pay for those highest levels of bandwidth, even up to 10 G, only when you need it. Further the ability to observe the network and make these adjustments in real time is critical.

2.) Security – The security advantage of Layer 2 data services is well known—proprietary data should never be put at risk over the Internet. Business Ethernet is private. It’s not accessible from the Internet or part of any shared system. Other critical elements of Big Data network security protocols include the ability to observe activity on your network in real time and having direct connections into on-net data centers.

3.) Reliability – Securely working with Big Data in an external environment is of little value if you can’t get to it when you need it in a timely manner. Clearly you won’t get this from the Internet; private MPLS and private Ethernet are preferable. Meshed networks and connecting nodes through multiple switches, typically minimize latency. Finally, creating redundant connections, often using different carriers, can be a very cost-effective and prudent way to minimize the impact of a network failure.

Big Data will only get bigger. Those who complain about “information overload” will be left behind by competitors who are excited about Big Data and know how to take advantage of it. But accessing and using Big Data in a way that will drive enterprises growth first requires a smart network.

tw telecom is a leading national provider of Business Ethernet and networking solutions, delivering secure, scalable private connections for transport data networking, Internet access, voice, VPN, VoIP, and security to large organizations and communications services companies. Employing a resilient fiber network infrastructure and proprietary Intelligent Network capabilities, tw telecom delivers customers overall economic value, an industry-leading service experience, and improved business productivity. Please visit www.twtelecom.com for more information.
The term, the Internet of Things (IoT) was coined in 1999 by Kevin Ashton, MIT Auto-ID director, though the concept had been in discussion since the early 90's. The very first Internet application developed was a Coke machine at Carnegie Melon University where the programmers could connect to the machine over the Internet and check inventory to determine whether or not it was worth a walk down the hall for a cold pop. And, that was in the early 80's.

After all, if all objects and people were equipped with unique identifiers and the ability to automatically transfer data over a network without requiring human-to-human or human-to-computer interactions, they could easily be managed and inventoried by computers. The IoT has evolved from the convergence of wireless technology, microelectromechanical systems and the Internet. Originally, radio frequency identification (RFID) was viewed as a prerequisite for the IoT. Now days, in addition to RFID, the tagging of things can be done through technologies such as near field communication, barcodes, QR codes and digital watermarking.

The Internet of Things has the potential to change the world, just like the Internet did. The next generation of Internet applications using Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPv6) would be able to communicate with devices attached to virtually all human-made objects because of the extremely large address space and scalability of the IPv6 protocol. Devices can use IPv6 as a source and destination addresses to pass information over a network. The obvious improvement in IPv6 over its predecessor IPv4 is that IP address are lengthened from 32 bits to 128 bits. And, it’s integrated security and mobility features as well. Steve Leibson, Computer History Museum, states that we could assign an IPv6 address to every atom on the surface of the earth and still have plenty available. The Internet of Things could encode 50 to 100 trillion objects and be able to follow the movement of those objects. Today, humans in an urban environment are each surrounded by an estimated 1000 to 5000 trackable objects.

What is not part of the IoT? The trends and characteristics of the IoT may change over time and with new technology discoveries, but ambient intelligence and autonomous control are not currently part of the IoT. However, there is ongoing research to integrate the concepts of the IoT and autonomous control. Challenges that remain include the constraints of variable spatial scales, the need to handle massive amounts of data, and indexing for fast search and neighboring operations. There is a global standards initiative to promote a unified approach and development of technical standards for a global scale to enable worldwide service providers to offer the wide range of services expected by this technology. The US National Intelligence Council reports concerns that an open market for aggregated sensor data could prove fundamentally incompatible with our Fourth Amendment guarantees against unreasonable search to protect consumer privacy. And, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) “big data and the IoT will make it harder for us to control our own lives and we grow increasingly transparent to powerful corporations and government institutions that are being more opaque to us.”

It behooves us all to pay close attention to the developments of the IoT. Researchers and developers are diligently working on the underlying low-energy protocols, routing algorithms and related technologies. It’s exciting to think of the day that all of these things are combined with people, processes and data through the network to deliver transformational value to the world by improving the way we make decisions.

1. From Tech Target “What is Internet of Things Definition”  
2. From Wikipedia “The Internet of Things”  
3. Image courtesy of Cisco Share “The Internet of Things”
How do you encourage innovation in your company? How do you look at engaging ideas, evaluate them and choose the most valuable solutions to move forward? How do you get a team of analytic thinkers to become creative engines for the business and how do you bring thought leaders down to the realistic delivery of value-based products. Those questions stood as the basis for a concept I call the Explore, Try, Adopt (ETA) innovation process.

The ETA process takes ideas from several disciplines and combines them into a formidable innovation tool. As with any good process, it begins with engaging the right people in the right way. Each team member is asked to operate within a given role. This allows the team member a huge amount of individual freedom with the overall process and frees them to disconnect from objections that would otherwise limit good ideas. The team consists of staff from all areas of the business and are not limited solely to your IT teams. Careful consideration must be paid to avoid putting too many like-minded people on the team; conflict is a necessary part of the process. The team consists of six members:

1.) **Leader**
   - A clear communicator that will keep things moving, but not slow the process

2.) **Genius**
   - A quick thinking problem solver

3.) **Radical**
   - A free-thinking contrarian willing to challenge the as-is state

4.) **Expert**
   - A technical thinker with analytic reasoning and deep knowledge

5.) **Voice of the customer**
   - A people-oriented caretaker of the customer’s needs

6.) **Designer**
   - A hands-on builder that can envision and create

Once the team has been identified, the process can start. The process itself was created in a way that stages work into creative and analytic buckets. The compartmentalization maximizes speed through the pipeline by focusing all efforts on a single goal. By having specific types of work in each stage, it frees people from looking at detail down the road, but keeps the overall goal within sight.

The Explore phase is the starting point for all activity. This gives innovative thinkers a platform to really vent ideas and be creative in their processes. This stage helps govern and manage your IT investment by looking at emerging technologies, assigning value to them, and determining which ones best resonate with the business units. If a solution has promise, the team will start the initial research and look at the problem, visit sites, talk to customers and develop an understanding of the issues. Only after they fully understand the issues can they start to look at solutions. They try out some ideas using rapid prototyping techniques like storyboards and modelling to see how well they work. By the end of this stage, nearly 60% of the solutions evaluated will be identified as impractical to move forward. Failure is good at this step because it makes the final product stronger and more resilient.

By: Mark Boyed, CIO for Lion

(continued on page 11)
Once a hypothesis is selected to move ahead, it is run through final evaluation and checked for faulty logic, design and concept.

The Try phase is where the Designer gets to shine. A virtual server environment called the ETA network is used for all ETA projects so that it is separated from other development environments as well as the production systems. This allows virtual servers to be created, modified, destroyed and rebuilt very rapidly by the developer without having other resource hours spent on the process. The team creates small prototypes and evaluates the features and functions to ensure that they perform as claimed and are close to the anticipated costs. The technology is evaluated against the business model and taken to the business to ensure they are desirable additions. By the end of this stage, an additional 20% of the initial solutions will be dropped. If the business wants the solution, it moves into the adopt phase.

The Adopt phase is managed by a Project Management Office (PMO). The PMO identifies the value for each new technology based on Return On Investment (ROI) and Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) models. This evaluation gives the business a financial view of the solution and ties existing strategy to the success criteria. The PMO also creates a model for execution and a process to track and monitor progress. At this point, the PMO assigns a Project Manager (PM) to work the overall project. The PM uses the information gathered during the ETA process to identify which solutions should be internal, outsourced or moved to the cloud. The PM creates a plan that will cover all aspects of moving the solution into a production environment including all user training and documentation.

The ETA innovation process can revolutionize technology adoption in many companies. Projects are completed faster, with fewer missed features and customer satisfaction is increased substantially. By moving forward with innovative ideas in your management of technology, you will see innovative technologies for your business.
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Why invest time and money learning JAVA?

1. Wonderful community support
   Community is the biggest strength of Java programming language and platform. There is community to help beginners, advanced and even expert Java programmers. Java actually promotes taking and giving back to community habit.

2. Excellent documentation support - Javadoc
   Not every one has time and intention to look at code to learn what a method does or how to use a class. Javadoc makes learning easy and provides an excellent reference while coding in Java.

3. Java is an Object Oriented Programming Language
   Java is an Object Oriented Programming language. Developing OOPS application is much easier, and it also helps to keep system modular, flexible and extensible. Once you have knowledge of key OOPS concept like Abstraction, Encapsulation, Polymorphism and Inheritance, you can use all those with Java.

4. Java is Platform Independent
   In the 1990s, this was the main reason of Java’s popularity. The idea of platform independence is great, and Java’s tagline “Write once run anywhere” was enticing enough to attract lots of new development in Java. One of the reasons Java is the best programming language is that most Java applications are developed in a Windows environment and run in UNIX platform.

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6/26-6/27, 8am-5pm, $1,295

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7/14-7/16, 8am-5pm, $1,100

Java Fundamentals
7/21-7/25, 8am-5pm, $3,250

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