



An Insider's Peek – Trends in Software

An interview with Ed Bonaski, Sherwood Systems

Ed Bonaski knows about plot lines, and even the software world has its own story arc.

Bonaski spent years working in the publishing industry providing ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software before he traded his Fifth Avenue office for a position as Account Executive at Sherwood Systems in Phoenix, Arizona.

In the last six years he's peeked inside the pages of so many varied companies, he's learned a lot about different industries and their unique needs. He also has learned that there are many similarities with these industries in business flow and what they are looking for with an ERP system.

"I've been exposed to industries that certainly broadened my knowledge of the workings of these companies – from rock and gravel companies, to companies that maintain inventory on human body parts from people that donate their organs. Order fulfillment has the same components regardless if it's books, kidneys or widgets. Orders need to be entered, discounts applied, inventory decremented, shipped, payments applied and, in some cases, dealing with returns. My job is to understand the nuances of the business and provide guidance to our implementation consultants as to the client's vision."

Increase in Out of the Box Functionality

"Tier 2 ERP software today has come a long way in the last 10 years. Gone are the days where implementations took a year or more with many changes to the core software. Today, most needs are met right out of the box and for those that have specific vertical requirements, the strong Microsoft Dynamics Independent Software Vendor community has already built it and Microsoft has signed off on its seamless integration with Dynamics GP (Great Plains)."

Bonaski says the common theme for software today is that – no matter what, people need an easy-to-use system that has a short learning curve. C level people need information that is as current as the last keystroke. We all are working smarter and leaner and every decision needs to be made with the confidence that the information presented is solid.

The Advent of Cloud Computing

Enter the cloud – a plot twist if there ever was one. It no longer distinguishes between the multi-national companies and the 10-person company. Everyone can use it, adapt it within reason to their own purposes and achieve some measure of success.

"One of the things I tell people is that you don't get a handicap for being a small company. You have to be a big company in every sense of the word. Just like people with their websites – when you click on their website, if it's done right, you'll never know if the business is just some guy in his underwear."

The beauty lies in this kind of one-on-one accessibility.

“If you’re competing with a bigger company, you have to have that functionality, even if you’re a start-up operation. Being able to reduce that initial cash outlay means you’re going to have that ability to compete.”

Bonaski says it’s too soon to predict how the cloud will affect the future of software, but he suspects the real story lies in deepening the appreciation of what software can do for each individual business so that the unique qualities rise to the surface.

Like self-publishing, the cloud has become an equalizer. The book gets printed; the software gets installed. The real question is what’s inside - how good a fit is it really?

“Cloud software is going to be ubiquitous,” he says. “What’s important is that people really think about what they want the software to do, and really put the effort in to getting that right. Focus on that and let the data center focus on hardware and infrastructure.”

By opting for a cloud deployment, small to mid-sized organizations can reap the same benefits as the Fortune 1000 companies, save up to 50% of the overhead, and re-invest the savings in growth and new jobs - all without a capital investment. Now that’s a best seller!



Ed Bonaski,
Sherwood Systems

As Account Executive at Sherwood Systems, Ed loves working with new industries. A 12-year veteran of the software sales industry, he prides himself on his well-honed ability to understand a client’s needs and develop a vision that helps them achieve their goals.

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