An Enterprise Software and Services Company Specializing in Customer Experience Management and Corporate Intelligence, Attensity Uses Semantic Intelligence to Enhance Decision-Making Processes for Companies

Business Services
Analytics

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Kirsten Bay
President & CEO

BIO:
Kirsten Bay serves as president and CEO for Attensity, an enterprise software and services company specializing in customer experience management and corporate intelligence. She is a recognized leader in business process integration and turnaround initiatives. With a background that crosses multiple industries, Kirsten leverages almost 20 years of experience in policy, finance, and information management to drive strategic business processes and structural policy changes towards creating more effective and innovative organizations.

At Attensity, Kirsten guides teams in their development of cutting edge technologies that continually deepen their trademark listening and analyzing capacities of the ever-growing big data pools to surface tactical and strategic insights aimed at better understanding customers, competitive threats, and market opportunities. Combining the strength of four development offices with its headquarters in Palo Alto, California, Attensity is empowering companies such as Cisco, JetBlue, Yahoo!, eBay, Verizon and Whirlpool to enhance brand equity through the Attensity listening and engagement platforms.

Prior to Attensity, Kirsten developed econometric policy models for information protection and national security programs and served as vice president of Commercial Business at iSIGHT Partners where she developed programs designed to enable the private sector to integrate cyber intelligence into their risk management, financial forecasting, and business decision programs. Kirsten came to data economics and analytics from the financial services sector, where she managed $750 million in wealth management trust banking portfolios. She holds a BA in English and German from the University of Oregon.

About Attensity:
Attensity is an enterprise software and services company specializing in customer experience management and corporate intelligence. Using semantic intelligence and other technologies, Attensity "reads" millions of real-time conversations from web, social media, emails, surveys, and other internal sources, providing deep insights into a company's market and customers and powering more effective customer engagement processes.

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Ms. Bay, what is the concept at Attensity?
Ms. Bay: The concept of Attensity is to utilize our technology of natural language processing to understand sentiment and intent around what is happening in the social world and its impact on companies. We enhance this social conversation with traditional methodologies such as taking those conversations into an enterprise through a customer care center or our marketing division. In essence, we take those tactical pieces and translate them into strategic direction to enhance decision-making processes for a company. Additionally, we are now also working on incorporating the intelligence function that takes us beyond social analytics to help broaden the process even more.

CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of how the process works?
Ms. Bay: I will provide an example of what we do for some of our largest customers who use our Respond platform to listen to many conversations that are occurring out in the internet. We have a Pipeline product, which utilizes the Twitter Firehose in addition to another 470 million documents that we bring into our organization every day such as blog posts, twitter conversations, public Facebook conversations, and anything that is out in

the public domain. The customer would bring this Pipeline product on to their platform by having category sets created or certain targeted words so that they understand what people are saying in the world about them. They would then look at the results and see for example that there was a customer service issue with a bad experience, a PR issue, or proof of concept highlighting key verticals that they are trying to validate. They could see competitive issues surfacing. They can then push the findings off to the groups handling the new proof of concepts, or to the CFO if there was revenue risk, and filter through the customer service issues. So instead of just looking at whether someone likes or dislikes something you are doing, we have the ability to develop analytics around the "why" people like something or dislike it, track their intent to buy something or not to buy something. These metrics are being tied to revenue goals inside of the organization, allowing people to see whether the social/customer care teams inside of the organization are actually driving x amount of revenue, x amount of new customers, and customer retention. It is now becoming a central focus point of the strategic direction of the company to understand where new revenue is coming from, where revenue can be impacted, and what new options exist to drive new products and services inside a company.

CEOCFO: How widely accepted is the concept in general? Have many companies realized that they to do more than just look at social media?
Ms. Bay: For us, social is a variable to connect to other key decision pieces inside of an organization. That is the transition point, because where many companies are trying to understand the value of social in an organization, we are actually helping to drive the strategic decision process from a tool that's purely tactical. There are many social listening tools that tell us if someone likes something or does not like something, but what does that really mean for your ability to action on something inside of an organization? How does it enhance your ability to do something

meaningful inside of your business? Our ability to connect between verticals inside of an organization and to serve up key insights inside of an organization is how you are leveraging the social variable and attaching it to the overall business process of what your organization is trying to accomplish.

CEOCFO: Attensity has a large list of well-known customers. Is there a common industry, type or size of company that are more of your customers today? Is there a particular area where you see the most growth?
Ms. Bay: We spend a lot of time in the B2C world, and our customer list includes Fortune 1000 and Global 2000 companies. Focusing on verticals is a key component of our business, which, in the world of language enhances our ability to service customer needs. Telecommunications is a very big vertical for us as well as ecommerce and consumer electron-

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> **– Kirsten Bay**

ics. We have developed custom dictionaries and key performance indicators around those verticals. Since they are very tight margin businesses, our tools boost their ability to be much more efficient in their business process delivery. When these companies understand how customers are feeling about the particular product or service, and are able to aggregate the larger set of the customer voices, they can develop strategic direction and decision-making priorities around those conversations. It is also critical for these companies to be able to very quickly action on the census side of customer voice to understand, and then predict, certain actions an organization would take to drive consumer sentiment around their product or service.

CEOCFO: Do many companies take advantage of the training courses and education that you provide, and have you done follow-up to learn what is

parts of your offering are being used and what is not?
Ms. Bay: We do have a very strong education program as part of what we offer, mainly because our tools are very robust and it takes time to program the system. During onboarding, we work closely with our customers to develop custom dictionaries and help them understand how to best utilize the product. It does take time to become proficient at some of the deep-dive aspects of our analytics tool. That is where we leverage our Professional Services team, which at times can also support custom deep dive reporting. Depending on the level of programming complexity that goes into the reports, this team can run the reports and send them to the customers. We spend a great deal of time with our customers to develop a solid understanding of how they are using the product, which allows us to further enhance their experience. As we develop our next generation of products, it is key for us to understand what specifically is most utilized and how. The how is a critical piece. For example, our Respond product, besides being used to interact with customers also serves a workflow tool. Because our Professional Services team is so tightly integrated with our customer base, they are able to drive those knowledge pieces, which helps us make the tool much more efficient.

CEOCFO: How do you ensure that your programs are the most efficient as well as the easiest to use for each customer?
Ms. Bay: Because of the problem's inherent complexity, that is an ongoing process for our company as well as most companies. At Attensity, we focus closely on our customer use cases, something I strongly emphasize we do more of as we grow. This new process integrates our Product, Professional Services and Sales teams with our customer base, and helps us in building user communities, developing prototypes, and by engaging our customers as innovation partners. It is a delightful process, because of the learning and insights we gain. This will ensure a much more friendly user interface in our next gen-

eration products because those insights essentially cover 80% of what everybody needs. A big question is "what problem are we trying to solve for our customers, and where are those latent pieces in creating the solution sets to this problem?" I think that often software companies lose sight of that question and it results in a complicated architecture given that they are trying to solve multiple problems at once.

CEOCFO: How has Attensity changed in the six months or so that you have been at the helm?

Ms. Bay: We have done a lot of work in six months, primarily becoming much more operationally focused as an organization. That was one of the things that were very important to me - to become much more disciplined and focused on what we are doing. The market has changed so quickly, and we have been in such quick motion that I have tried to slow the progression to focus on the core of what we do. My goal has been to get our people to be much more deliberative about what they are doing and take the time to put processes in place that will streamline their resources. We have brilliant and engaged people in the company, and I want to give them the time and space to think more and react less.

CEOCFO: You have a considerable history in a number of different businesses with policy, process, and organization. What have you learned from previous experiences that have been most helpful here at Attensity?

Ms. Bay: Taking time to sit and listen to the internal knowledge repository that we have as well as the knowledge repository of our customer base. The thing that has always made me the happiest in my career is having the opportunity to be in front of our people and our customers to listen and better understand what it is that makes a difference and adds value. What I find most rewarding about business is meeting people who are excited about making that difference. Being able to fundamentally change how people use and acquire information to make decisions is the most interesting of all the things that I have worked on in my career. Being able to be with our smart people and getting out there in front of audiences to engage in thought leadership around the new way that we can tackle this problem. This for me is very exciting.

CEOCFO: How do you reach potential customers?

Ms. Bay: We have Lead Generation, referrals, and a PR function. I am consistently pleased with how people learn and hear about what it is that we are doing and come knock on the door. Our Lead Generation process is quite effective in bringing customers to Attensity.

CEOCFO: What does your competitive landscape look like?

Ms. Bay: The social analytics world is a somewhat crowded field and something we are moving away from. We are developing a tactical-to-strategic analytics tool that utilizes unstructured data from a robust platform. It is not something that is widely offered, and

we are finding that we are filling a unique space that is needed, which is the real time social interaction that is on that singular platform. We are working on trying to understand the broad range of that marketplace, but the key for us is to differentiate ourselves away from a social analytics brand into a broader, more strategic set.

CEOCFO: Why should people in the business and investment community pay attention to Attensity?

Ms. Bay: We have found a way to solve a really challenging question, which is how do people turn a tactical action into a strategic process. In my career in the intelligence space as well as in the financial space, I saw that many people were buying products that enabled them to solve a tactical problem because they can touch, love, and feel that tactical problem. They understood when they completed a task. The challenge in the marketplace that I have seen for many years is how to aggregate all of the actions created today to inform me of what business strategies and decisions I need to take tomorrow. How do I influence my business, and what are those key strategic decisions? A really big gap in business is being able to understand how incremental, daily tactical aspects in your business actually turn into strategic insights. That is the problem we are solving, and for me that is a big differentiator because the pivot point has been the missing piece.

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