

With 80 percent of their New Customers coming by Referrals from Existing Customers, SLA-grade Professional Services Company, OSF Global Services is positioned for Growth as a Global Provider of IT services dedicated to Ecommerce, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Cloud Computing Integration

**Business Services
Technology**

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Gerard Szatvanyi
CEO

BIO:

Gerard Szatvanyi, President and CEO, founded OSF Global Services in 2003. Gerry has more than 10 years of expertise in managing start-ups and medium size IT businesses and ideas to quickly drive them to peak performance. With background in Enterprise Applications, IT Services and Consultancy, Gerry's impressive client and business portfolio sets him

in the new breed for global entrepreneurship. Gerry holds a M. Sc. from Laval University, Quebec City. He also holds management and board positions in other start-ups and medium size businesses with IT related activities.

About OSF Global Services:

OSF has been delivering SLA-grade professional services since 2003, having established itself as a trusted advisor and technology integrator to clients in 17 countries across North America, Europe and Asia. The company's forte is application development and technology integration across key markets, including Ecommerce, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Cloud. Headquartered in Quebec, Canada, OSF has offices in the U.S., France, Germany, Romania and Ukraine. This mix of onshore and offshore expertise offers comprehensive, follow-the-sun support for its clients. OSF Global Services is ISO 9001:2008 certified, Microsoft Certified, a Salesforce.com Consulting Partner, a Netsuite Solutions Partner and a Rackspace Hosting Member Partner.

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Szatvanyi, please give us a description of OSF. What do you do?

Mr. Szatvanyi: We are a global provider of IT services, mostly dedicated to Ecommerce, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and cloud computing. Our forte is building custom software solutions, custom-

izing commercial applications, and integrating those applications into clients' environments. We also have an extensive background making legacy applications communicate with modern systems through custom integration layers, so that helps our clients extend the life of their IT investments.

CEOCFO: What are some of the special challenges in integrating the various components? What do you know at OSF that allows you to do it more smoothly than others?

Mr. Szatvanyi: Our special skills lie in integrating independent platforms and especially integrating cloud platforms. It requires a very deep understanding of each platform. It also requires an understanding of the business that each platform supports, with areas such as CRM, ecommerce, cloud ERP software; integrating these platforms on the cloud requires in-depth technical knowledge. The way we approach it is to create components that will pre-integrate these platforms. That way when customers come to us with their integration needs, we already have a leg up in understanding all of the various platforms.

CEOCFO: Are most companies working cloud-based now, or is it still something that companies have been resisting?

Mr. Szatvanyi: Not the clients that we are working with across North America and Europe. We mostly work with companies that are early adopters in terms of technology, so they are open to the idea of cloud and look to us to help them become

educated on its relevance to their particular business.

CEOCFO: How do you reach perspective customers?

Mr. Szatvanyi: Primarily through and with our partners. Because we have proven our expertise and technology skillset over the years, partners consistently recommend us to their customers. Oftentimes we accompany partners on sales calls where we listen to the customers' challenges and talk about our recommended solutions. In fact about 80 percent of our new customers are referred by existing customers. Of course we also participate in conferences and webinars, and do the standard out-bound marketing activities. However most of our growth has come from referrals, which I think speaks to the quality of our work and customer satisfaction.

CEOCFO: When you are working with a customer are they taking advantage of the full range of your services, or do they pick and choose from what you have available?

Mr. Szatvanyi: Every customer's challenge is unique because every company's environment is unique. So we adjust our services to fit their particular needs. We've been at this for 10 years now and there are no two customers for which we delivered the exact same services. It is usually a mix of our service portfolio adjusted and customized. And then those services are coupled with the technology tools and methodologies that work best for that customer's environment. For example not all organizations work in the same way in terms of human collaboration. So we need to make sure that our processes align with their processes and our teams align with their teams. In the services industry, "chemistry" is extremely important in the delivery process.

CEOCFO: It appears that there is a lot of interaction with your customers. When you look for people to represent OSF, in addition to the technical skills, what do you look for in people skills? How do you get the

two together in the right mix that works best to represent you?

Mr. Szatvanyi: The first criteria I look for is attitude. I look for people who are passionate solution finders; people that do not run from a challenge; people who embrace problems and are excited to try to fix them. Second, I look for smart technical people who understand systems and processes, not just software. However, at the end of the day, you can always train people on the newest technologies or development tools or your approach to projects. But attitude is, I believe, in the person's DNA.

CEOCFO: Would you give us an example – either a specific name or generically? A company comes to you and they say that they need help. What do you do? How do you evaluate the project? What are some of the steps that you take to get it going?

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Mr. Szatvanyi: First we assess how well they are prepared; if they really understand the problem they are trying to address. Sometimes people come to us and say "I think I have a problem in this area. I am not sure. Could you look into it?" In those cases we start by providing one, two or three weeks consulting during which we do a thorough analysis of the systems they have, and their business processes. And then we get back to them with a solution recommendation. On the other hand, we hear from companies that have a very well defined problem and a very well defined project. They know what they want to do and how they want to approach it. In these situations we look at those specific requirements, discuss the deliverables, timeline, resources required and cost. We embrace the skills model, not a locations-based model. In other words we staff a project based on the skill sets required for that particular engagement, matching technical expertise and project management expertise with the problems that need

to be addressed. The result is a virtual team with members in multiple locations. For example, the customer might be in Boston and our project team includes employees located in Canada, Boston, Paris and Romania working together as a cohesive, seamless team. We apply a rigorous set of tools to monitor the quality of our work, project development, customer feedback and so forth. Again, the execution part is very important for us because customer satisfaction drives referrals, which is a major driver in terms of our growth and marketing efforts. So rather than theoretically embrace quality processes, we walk the talk. And as a result, customers have posted recommendations to the OSF profiles on LinkedIn, Salesforce AppExchange, Microsoft Pinpoint and our own OSF website.

CEOCFO: I know you do some consulting as well. How big a part of the business is that and is that a growing area for you?

Mr. Szatvanyi: Historically consulting has been around five to ten percent of our business. However over the last year or so this side of our business is growing rapidly. More and more customers are interested in exploring different solutions to make themselves more competitive or more efficient. So we see consulting as an increasingly important service in our portfolio mix.

CEOCFO: How do you see the effect of the economy in the last few years? Has it been helpful or harmful or not really applicable for your business?

Mr. Szatvanyi: Not really applicable for our business. We have been growing at a consistently rapid pace, so the global recession has not impacted our business. Ironically, in 2012 we were looking to hire in the Boston area and had a difficult time finding the right talent.

CEOCFO: What is ahead for OSF?

Mr. Szatvanyi: We are aggressively rolling out offices now in Europe. We opened an office in Paris at the beginning of 2012 and it is doing very well. We did the same in Germany in

September and already have a very large prospective customer in the ecommerce space. Also, we are opening an office in Milan and have a few ecommerce prospects with big Italian brands. We will have a London office either late this year or early 2013. This is a direct result of our current, name brand ecommerce customers in North America asking us to expand in tandem with their international expansion into emerging markets in Europe. Also in 2013 we are looking at opening offices in Hong Kong and Moscow. Although this is a very ambitious growth schedule, OSF as a company is accustomed to working through challenges and doing what it takes to meet our customers' business needs. I am sure my team would tell you that I am putting a lot of pressure on them, but when we look back over our previous 10-year history, our accomplishments speak for themselves. So to keep that momentum going for the next 10

years, we are rapidly entering new markets and additional locations.

CEOCFO: You have been an entrepreneur for a number of years; what are the most important lessons that you have learned? What do you bring to the table from your past experience that has been really helpful with OSF?

Mr. Szatvanyi: I would say execution, execution, execution, execution. There are tons of great ideas out there. There are tons of smart people. There is even VC money out there. But at the end of the day, what really makes the difference is execution. People who know how to execute well, who know how to be flexible, to adjust their plans in real-time, and then execute well on the new plan. This is what really makes the difference, I believe. A disciplined, organized team focused on execution. Google is a good example of this. Sure they had good technology, but the company really took off and went

global when Eric Schmidt came on board. He really nailed it by executing the business with discipline and precision. That approach is also evident in other big companies where you have CEO's or managers who are focused and committed to delivering and pushing things ahead in a disciplined manner. At the end of the day that is what matters, because even if you have a mediocre plan, a good team will be able to adapt, shift things around and execute the new plan successfully.

CEOCFO: Why should investors and people in the business community be paying attention to OSF today?

Mr. Szatvanyi: We will be a major player in this industry – in software and the cloud space. In five to seven years from now, I expect you will hear about us on a global scale. Especially with cloud development, we will be one of the major players this market place.



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