Open Source IT Services for Companies, Governments and Nonprofits

About Appnovation Technologies

Appnovation was founded in 2007 as a Vancouver based Drupal Development shop. Specializing in the open source stack, Appnovation uses Drupal, Alfresco and several leading HTML5 frameworks, to develop exceptional web, intranet and cross-platform mobile applications. Appnovation's team also has the capabilities to deliver middleware, Big Data, and business intelligence solutions with MuleSoft, Hadoop and MongoDB. We provide technology solutions to clients located all around the world. Our clients range from start-ups to multi-national companies.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Mr. Leung, what is the concept behind Appnovation?*
Mr. Leung: We are an open source IT services company. We specialize in building software solutions for companies, governments and nonprofits around the world, using the open source deck, which includes primarily technologies such as Drupal, MuleSoft and HTML5.

Arnold Leung - CEO

CEOCFO: *What do you understand fundamentally about building applications? Why are people coming to you?*
Mr. Leung: Over the past five or six years, there has been a big drive to use open source technologies. Historically, companies neutralize software from say, Microsoft to build their software on. Microsoft technologies are licensed to the user, which means they can only use it for as specific purpose they paid for. They cannot modify or edit anything on the source code level. Open source, like the Linux distribution, allows users to easily edit, modify and change the code base as needed and also contributes that back to the communities. Many people can make use of the changes to it. Open source drives down the total cost ownership for software, which is the reason it has been adopted widely by governments and bigger companies in the last five or six years. Those are reasons why we have been chosen to do many of these projects, because we are the experts in the open source field.

CEOCFO: *What do you understand about the process that perhaps others do not?*
Mr. Leung: Open source is all we do. Many companies do open source as part of a bigger offering of services. Being the specialist in the area, we are able to do a great deal of R&D around it and be ahead of the curve, knowing what is happening pretty soon with the technologies that we work on.

CEOCFO: *What is the key to keeping up with all the new ideas?*
Mr. Leung: We invest a great deal into R&D and by having staff members that are pretty dedicated towards researching to new topics. Having a dedicated team in that area allows us to be ahead of the curve.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to potential customers and how do they find you?*
Mr. Leung: Many customers find us because we are so specialized in technologies we work on. For example, in MuleSoft, there are only like four to five major companies in North America that work with this technology, so companies that MuleSoft services are wanting to be able to customize that platform for their software will come to us naturally.

CEOCFO: *Are marketing and outreach a focus at Appnovation?*
Mr. Leung: We do reach out pretty aggressively. We host events to attract potential customers. We have webinars. We have a pretty strong presence. We blog a great deal to talk about our knowledge and understanding of our technologies. We work closely with our partners such as Acquia, Alfresco and MuleSoft, to organize these marketing functions too.

CEOCFO: *Do you have particular types of projects that you prefer to work on?*
Mr. Leung: We do have a preference to work on projects that require a great deal of innovation, that are technically challenging because our staff is highly trained and we have a great deal of experience in different areas. Projects that involve a great deal of scale outs and strong security requirements are definitely projects of choice.

CEOCFO: *What are some examples of a common project and something a little more outside the box?*
Mr. Leung: We do a great deal of work for the health care field. One of the bigger projects we worked on is a massive internet system for Mercy Health, which is a hospital network down in St. Louis. We helped them create an integrated Drupal and Alfresco intranet framework, using our Canopy product, which allows them to have a highly scalable system to share information within their offices.

CEOCFO: *Would that be a typical project?*
Mr. Leung: Yes, large scale, high security requirements, massive user base and information sharing application.

CEOCFO: *Do customers typically come back for repeated projects?*
Mr. Leung: Yes, for many customers, it is ongoing and stable and they keep coming back. Therefore, about 65% of our business is repeat at this point in time.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic reach?*
Mr. Leung: We are still primarily focused around the US and the UK markets. We do a bit of services in Canada. We also have customers in Switzerland, Hong Kong and China.

CEOCFO: *Would you like to see the geographic reach expand?*
Mr. Leung: We plan to invest more into expanding Europe. For example, we are going to open up an office in Wales pretty soon to allow for more R&D to be done in the European region. We also plan to have more reach to East Asia in the next few months or a year. Samsung is one of our key customers and we want to leverage our experience working with them to work with other Korean customers.

> **"As a revolution towards using open source software becomes a norm, I think we are definitely in the right place to capture that and continue our rapid growth." - Arnold Leung**

CEOCFO: *Why is this the time for the expansion?*
Mr. Leung: Many economies right now are recovering from the economic crisis, especially in Europe. Therefore, it is a good time to hire great talent and expand the market.

CEOCFO: *How do you find your people? Over and above technical skills, what do you look for in your staff?*
Mr. Leung: We definitely look for people that are able to work within teams because pretty much all of the projects are team based and communication is really important. We always have to be in constant communication with client teams or partner teams so being able to handle all of that communication is important for us.

CEOCFO: *How is business?*
Mr. Leung: Business is great. We are growing pretty fast. Like I said, we are opening in Wales, we opened an office in Montreal a few months ago, so we are expanding fairly rapidly and looking to continue doing that.

CEOCFO: *Why take notice of Appnovation?*
Mr. Leung: We are a fast growing company. We have been able to double up for that last few years every year. As a revolution towards using open source software becomes a norm, I think we are definitely in the right place to capture that and continue our rapid growth.

CEOCFO: *Final thoughts? What should people reading about Appnovation remember most?*
Mr. Leung: The most interesting point is our global expansion. We have pretty big plans to be in more places across Europe and we have a growing team in the US. I think many readers are fairly interested in how companies can expand globally, especially under the current economic conditions and I think that is one point of interest.

BIO: Arnold is the CEO and Founder of Appnovation Technologies. Although he is a finance graduate from the UBC Sauder School of Business, he has always been an enthusiast in the realm of information technology. In 2007, Arnold saw the emergence of open source technologies in enterprises and governments and as a result founded Appnovation with the goal of helping organizations deploy open source solutions.

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