

Contact Intelligent Apps for Business Consumers



Manoj Ramnani
CEO & Founder
CircleBack Inc.

CEOCFO: Mr. Ramnani, would you tell us the idea behind CircleBack?

Mr. Ramnani: The basic idea is that we are trying to solve the contact problem. If you look at your address book, you will find that your contacts are broken, whether on your mobile device or in your Outlook or Gmail. There are duplicates, ones that are missing information, and contacts that are out of date. The problem exists for the individual users like you and I on a small scale. But, when you consider corporations, the problem increases exponentially. With corporations, where their customer “address book” is a CRM or marketing automation system... that’s a big contact problem, and that data is going out of date every day.

CEOCFO: How are you solving that problem?

Mr. Ramnani: The way we solve it is using an artificial intelligence algorithm and passive crowdsourcing. We have millions of users that use our contact-related applications: our app ScanBizCards, which allows users to scan business cards and transform them into contacts; ContactSaver, which helps you extract the signature from an email and convert it into a contact; and CircleBack; which helps you aggregate your contacts, de-dupe them, and keep those up to date and synchronized with your phone and other address books. Our users use those applications, and, in doing so, they bring contact data to our shared central pool. We then apply our artificial intelligence-based algorithm to determine the most up-to-date professional contact information for every individual in the world, and, finally, we give that value to all of our users by providing them the out-of-date contact updates, keeping their address books fresh

CEOCFO: Is it the assumption that if someone provides information that all of their information is public and therefore not an issue?

Mr. Ramnani: Yes and no. The algorithm process is more sophisticated. If, for example, you are the only person that brings my contact information to our shared contact repository, we don’t give that information to anybody. We have a threshold and confidence score that must be exceeded before we make contacts available for recommendation to our users. Moreover, we only update the business elements; we focus solely on business contact data: your title, your company, business email, and business phone number.

CEOCFO: When you talk to prospective customers are they generally individuals or businesses?

Mr. Ramnani: We’re always talking to both. We have millions of individual users looking to get their address books in order and businesses who desperately need to clean, complete and update their CRM and/or marketing automation data so that their sales force and their marketing team can be more effective.

CEOCFO: Is there much competition with the depth of CircleBack?

Mr. Ramnani: CircleBack is a unique company because we play in both the consumer and the business spaces. Similar concepts have been tried separately in these spaces with varying success. In the consumer space, there was a company called Plaxo, and about ten years ago they tried this thing. The model was that when I changed my contact information, an email was sent to everyone who had it asking them to update. But, it was very intrusive to be spammed and never quite took hold. In the business space, there was Jigsaw—they were a great company—but they were based on an Ebay model where salespeople went to contribute business cards that they received at trade shows and business meetings. They gamified the whole thing, and, in exchange for the contacts that the salespeople uploaded, they received points that allowed them to “draw” contacts they didn’t have. At CircleBack, we’re making it automatic and unintrusive, effectively bringing the two worlds together.

CEOCFO: *Who is using your services today, and where do you see the most growth?*

Mr. Ramnani: We have seen growth on both sides. Business users are using our services, and, typically, the profile is anybody at the manager level or above. Certain segments like sales, marketing, and business development folks also use this product a lot, and, on the business side, we're preferred by those who have large B2B offerings.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out for new customers?*

Mr. Ramnani: On the consumer side, we have apps; we are top-ten in the App Store this week, and Apple is featuring us as App of the Week. We've received a lot of downloads that way. Otherwise, we rely on marketing, of course, and the fact that our users love what we do and are strong CircleBack advocates. They've really helped us spread the word. We also enjoy reach from fine PR outlets like CEOCFO who allow us to take a more targeted approach to reaching our audience.

CEOCFO: *What has changed from your original concept, and why is the product better today than when you first started?*

Mr. Ramnani: When we first started, it was just a business card exchange, but I quickly realized that users needed a comprehensive solution for all their contacts, not just a business card management tool. People get contacts from everywhere, from business cards and email signatures and through social media, and they need a way to manage that.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic reach today?*

Mr. Ramnani: We have consumers worldwide but our focus has been the US. Next year we will be pushing more internationally.

"With CircleBack, you can effortlessly aggregate all of your contacts--from business cards, email, phone and from your social networks--in one place. You can clean, complete, and update those contacts quickly, and keep them that way forever." - Manoj Ramnani

CEOCFO: *Is Android also in the works for the upcoming year?*

Mr. Ramnani: That is correct. We will be rolling out Android in the next sixty days or so.

CEOCFO: *Do you have the necessary funding for the steps you would like to take or are you looking for partners or investment?*

Mr. Ramnani: We are very well funded, but for the growth capital, we will be looking for more partners later this year.

CEOCFO: *It seems like a simple concept to understand. Do you find any pushback from people, or are they just not aware yet?*

Mr. Ramnani: I think it is just that they don't know yet. We're finding that both consumers and businesses see the value and are excited almost immediately. When you download the app on your phone, we give you a free, immediate analysis of your contacts, and that is a selling point. After the thirty second analysis, our users learn they have, say, two thousand contacts and that 30% of them are duplicates or out of date, and that they have a tool in their hands to fix it. We offer smart analysis and a smart fix, and it is a big value add for our users.

CEOCFO: *Why pay attention to CircleBack?*

Mr. Ramnani: Your contacts are everywhere, and they're messy and decaying at a rate of over 30% per year. With CircleBack, you can effortlessly aggregate all of your contacts--from business cards, email, phone and from your social networks--in one place. You can clean, complete, and update those contacts quickly, and keep them that way forever. CircleBack also allows you synchronize your contacts with your phone book and email so that you can use them while you are on your desktop, phone, or tablet. Basically, CircleBack is the one place you can go when you want your contact list clean, complete, and updated.

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

For more information visit: www.circleback.com

Contact: Manoj Ramnani 703-725-4674 manoj.ramnani@circleback.com