

## Cloud Based Software for Collecting, Centralizing and Acting on Customer Feedback



**David Jackson - CEO**

### **About Clicktools**

Clicktools, founded in 2001, provides over 800 customers globally with cloud based software to collect, centralize and act on customer feedback. Customers choose Clicktools for the richness of its CRM integration, ease of use and the security and robustness of the application. Clicktools was one of the first 50 apps listed on salesforce.com's AppExchange and has won the AppExchange Customer Choice Award for every year it has run.

The company has offices in Phoenix, Arizona and Poole in the UK.

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

### **CEOCFO: Mr. Jackson, what is the concept at Clicktools?**

**Mr. Jackson:** We provide software that enables our customers to gather customer feedback, which is the easy part. The part that we do better than others is to centralize everything in one place so that they can act on it across the organization most effectively. So, our message is to collect it, centralize it and act on customer feedback.

### **CEOCFO: What have been the challenges in gathering and centralizing the data?**

**Mr. Jackson:** There are two challenges. One is that there are always technical challenges and increasingly customers want you to provide feedback across a whole range of channels. Therefore, we have to become smarter at getting feedback, whether it is through Facebook, email, mobile phones, forums or a website. The second challenge is that our evidence suggest that many companies are very good at collecting feedback, but few are effective in taking that feedback and doing something with it; in other words, driving change. Anyone that has completed a survey knows that they share that information because they hope the company that receives it will do something with it. Therefore, it is a technological change in terms of gathering it and making it available across the organization. Then there is a mindset change that needs to happen in some organizations, so that feedback is not just something where they have just a tick in a box.

### **CEOCFO: How do you help with that aspect?**

**Mr. Jackson:** We help in two ways. One is that our technology makes it easy for people to gather, centralize and act upon feedback. The second thing is that we understand a great deal about some of the challenges that companies face and not just in gathering it, but acting upon it. We spend a great deal of time on the ideas, concepts and change, as well as the culture and making the information visible. It is this combination of technology and advice that we give that makes a difference.

### **CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of how you are able to make that difference?**

**Mr. Jackson:** The one thing that we do different from everyone else in the feedback business is in the way that we help an organization leverage its CRM investment. The whole concept of CRM is a piece of software, as well as a set of ideas that allow you to manage the whole customer relationship. Obviously, a piece of feedback is only part of that relationship. It is an important part because it is the customer saying to you, "This is what I think about you." However, from our practical experience, we know how important it is to make this information visible in CRM, so that every time you deal with a company they have got the complete picture in front of them. For example, one of our customers said to us, "The way that you helped us make that information visible contributed to changing the culture to make it more customer focused." Therefore, it is how you employ that technology to make the information visible and actionable.

### **CEOCFO: What types of companies are typically using your services?**

**Mr. Jackson:** We have quite a wide range of companies using our services in terms of different industries. We are very strong in the technology industry, manufacturing and financial services. In terms of the size of organizations, it tends to be medium and large companies. Many Fortune 500 companies use Clicktools. However, in terms of types of industries that they work in, it is the whole range.

**CEOCFO: *How do you reach prospective customers and how do they find you?***

**Mr. Jackson:** That is one of our biggest challenges, but I sure many CEOs would say the same thing. We find that our customers are becoming smarter and smarter. They are using the internet much more to research the options and they have quite often done a great deal of research into what they are looking for in a solution before they ever think about contacting us. Increasingly what we have to do is use the expertise and knowledge that I mentioned earlier, to get across to the marketplace generally, how we are able to help and thereby interest them enough to see that we are worth talking to. We use a whole range of marketing tools. We are increasingly active on the social media fronts, which has become a huge part for us and we use other things like Google ad words and print advertising.

**CEOCFO: *Would you walk us through an implementation?***

**Mr. Jackson:** Many of our customers implement it for themselves. The application that we provide is easy to use and about 60% of our customers, other than contacting our excellent support desk, build their own surveys, do their own point and click integration and their own configuration. In terms of what is required, you have to build the mechanism to collect the feedback and deploy that in different ways, whether that is sent out by email or putting a link on a website. It may be putting a form on a Facebook or LinkedIn page. The next part is to tell the application how you want to share that information in CRM and how you want to make that visible thorough out the whole organization. The final piece is what we call, putting the final “closed loop actions” in place. The job is not done until you have driven someone to understand and where appropriate, act upon that feedback that has been given.

**“If you want to become the organization that leads your field in focusing on the customer, feedback is not an option. If you want to be the most effective at sharing feedback across the organization so that it gets acted upon day in and day out, the Clicktools is the only option.” - David Jackson**

**CEOCFO: *What is the key to having made it easy enough for people to work on it themselves; because that does not always happen?***

**Mr. Jackson:** You are right. It does not always happen and it is a challenge that we face constantly. What we do is fairly sophisticated, so the only thing that you can do is to try to put yourself into your customers' shoes and try to wipe out from our minds everything that we know. For example, if this were a brand new user coming, how would we help them walk through that process? We do two things. One is we make a nice, clean, easy to follow interface. The second is invest heavily in advice and resources to educate and guide our customers. In addition, we have a great support desk that has a great reputation for helping customers solve their problems.

**CEOCFO: *What is your geographic reach today?***

**Mr. Jackson:** Our geographic reach is global. The company was actually founded in the United Kingdom, so we have a UK office and an office in Phoenix, Arizona, where I am at the moment. About 60% of our customers are based in the US, and the reason for that is because the US leads the world in the adoption of customer relationship management technology, which we play a part in. We also have customers across Europe, in Australia, Japan, South Africa, Canada and South America.

**CEOCFO: *Where do you see the most growth?***

**Mr. Jackson:** In terms of volume, it is still in the US that we see the most growth. However, Europe and Japan are catching up quickly to the adoption of CRM. Those are the three centers.

**CEOCFO: *Do you do much work with non-profit organizations?***

**Mr. Jackson:** We have from day one recognized the contributions that not-for-profit organizations make to society. Therefore, we support that wherever we can. For example, not-for-profit organizations get a 50% discount on the price of the application. We also work with partners who focus on and specialize in the not-for-profit market space.

**CEOCFO: *What has change for you over time from the initial concept? What have you learned since the product has been in use?***

**Mr. Jackson:** Two things have changed. One is that complex or difficult to use technology is no longer acceptable. The amount of technology that is now used by people every day through things like Facebook, iPads, Android devices, which are very easy to use, so it has become an accepted way. The second thing is how something has not changed. The biggest challenge many organizations face is not with legacy technology, but legacy mind sets. Despite what we feel is overwhelming evidence of the power of the customer many organizations are reluctant to accept that power; to accept the importance of feedback and use it in the way that it should be used. Not just collecting it and sticking it in a PowerPoint deck, but to actually use it to change day-to-day operations and improve life for customers.

**CEOCFO: *What might be different at Clicktools a year down the road?***

**Mr. Jackson:** We will be bigger and we hopefully will have learned a few lessons from our own customers. In addition, we will have introduced some exciting new features in our application. We have just launched one, which is Text Analysis, which again is fully integrated with CRM and that is a world first. We will continue enjoy what we do and continue to put customers at the heart of what we do.

**CEOCFO: *What has surprised you as Clicktools has grown and developed?***

**Mr. Jackson:** How demanding customers are, but rightly so. Secondly, how the world has changed in terms of its acceptance and use of technology and how important people are. I do not think that surprised me, but it is always wise to reinforce to yourself and to others that technology is a wonderful thing, but at the end of the day it is all about the people that you have got.

**CEOCFO: *Put this all together for our readers. Why pay attention to Clicktools today?***

**Mr. Jackson:** If you want to become the organization that leads your field in focusing on the customer, feedback is not an option. If you want to be the most effective at sharing feedback across the organization so that it gets acted upon day in and day out, the Clicktools is the only option.

**CEOCFO: *Final thoughts?***

**Mr. Jackson:** I would just like to stress how important I think customers are to businesses these days and that might sound strange because I have always believed that to be the case. However, there are still some people out there that do not buy into this growth of customer power. It is a pity, because if they do not, they will not be around very much longer.

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**BIO:** David Jackson, is a founder and CEO of Clicktools, a leader in the field of customer feedback and widely recognised as an expert in the area of customer focused organizations. Much of his time is spent with clients, working with senior managers to design and implement effective feedback measurement and management strategies to build organisations that can continually adapt to meet changing customer needs.

David is a popular speaker around the world. He has had many articles published, and is the author of several books, including “Dynamic Organisations: The Challenge of Change” and “Becoming Dynamic”. When not working, he enjoys listening to music and watercolour painting, at which he needs much more practice!

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