

Cloud Service Cooperative Application Creation for Developers



Mark Geene
CEO & Co-Founder
Cloud Elements
www.cloud-elements.com

1.866.830.3456
info@cloud-elements.com

CEOCFO: Mr. Geene, what is the concept behind Cloud Elements?

Mr. Geene: Cloud Elements is a cloud service that enables developers to create “cooperative applications”. A cooperative application is an app that works seamlessly with cloud services that people, customers and businesses are using. For example, if a person has a Dropbox account, they can connect it to other services and use the data stored in their account. One of our customers, Totaljobs Group, is the leading job posting website in the UK, and their customers can connect right within the app to access Box, Dropbox, Google Drive and other services. If your application needs customer contact information or company information, you can pull that information right out of the company’s CRM system, like Salesforce or other services. In essence, we are an API aggregation service of cloud services.

CEOCFO: What is the competitive landscape? Are many companies providing something similar?

Mr. Geene: What has happened is that everything has an API (Application Programming Interface). Every application that is being developed in today’s world of the cloud has an API. Mobile apps, web apps and physical things have APIs. The challenge for developers now is that generally they have to integrate these APIs into their applications one at a time. They write to each individual API, so they are integrating all the time. What Cloud Elements does is provide a means for developers to integrate categories of services, for the time and cost of building one custom integration. If you look at integration platforms targeted at developers, we are really the first ones to take that approach. The other alternatives out there, such as the enterprise service buses, are really more for internal IT organizations, verses for application developers.

CEOCFO: Do developers know to look for Cloud Elements? Are they used to doing it themselves?

Mr. Geene: Among developers, we do not have that brand recognition yet. The developers are not searching for Cloud Elements. What they are searching for is “Salesforce.com API”, “HubSpot API” or “Dropbox API”, and then they find us as an alternative to writing that API. Really, the use case is when they need to integrate more than one service in a category. They might need to integrate more than one CRM system, finance system or marketing automation system. That is where you can save time on integration, essentially, when you need more than one integration.

CEOCFO: Are you seeing a trend in cloud integrations today?

Mr. Geene: You are exactly right. It is easier than ever to develop new applications. That’s the good news. The problem is there’s a proliferation in apps being built on APIs and the need for connectivity. Your customers are already using a variety of cloud services that they expect your app to connect too. Therefore yes; what we have found is that there is a tremendous need to connect to more than one cloud service in a category and that is where we make it simple.

CEOCFO: Would you tell us how are you able to do so?

Mr. Geene: We create a uniform API so that a developer can write to one API to access an entire category of services. Let’s say that your application needs to work with marketing automation systems like HubSpot, Marketo and Salesforce Marketing Cloud. You just write to one API and enable your application to interact and move data in and out of your application and between those services. The alternative is writing each API integration individually.

CEOCFO: How long has Cloud Elements been around?

Mr. Geene: Two years. We just had our two-year anniversary in October.

CEOCFO: What has changed today from when you started? What have you learned along the way?

Mr. Geene: We have learned along the way that developers are one of the scarcest of resources in our economy right now. There are just not enough experienced software developers available. They spend a tremendous amount of time

having to write all of these one-off integrations, and not only do it one time, but then they have to maintain them. This distracts the developer from building the core functionality of their application. That is where we really learned there is a great opportunity in the market. To provide a tool to developers to make their lives easier and more productive, so that they can work on building the fun things verses all of the plumbing, in this case.

CEOCFO: Are there any areas that you have not been able to figure out yet? Are there some challenges as new concepts and new systems emerge?

Mr. Geene: Yes. I think the biggest challenge that we face right now is that there are really an unlimited number of integrations because of the constantly growing number of applications and now even physical things that have APIs. Now even refrigerators and toothbrushes have APIs, so there is no limited number of potential integrations, or what we call “Hubs”, where you write to one uniform API to access a category of services. Therefore, the challenge is really just being focused on which integrations to build, when we build them, and prioritizing our resources on the right ones.

CEOCFO: Have you found any cloud services that you cannot write to?

Mr. Geene: We only integrate to cloud services that have an API. Therefore, if it does not have a defined application programming interface, we cannot write to it. Our customers tend to be companies that already have an API to their applications, so that they can connect to us.

CEOCFO: What is your business model?

Mr. Geene: Our business model is that the developer can come to our website and try our publicly available APIs for free. They can try it out, integrate it into their app, and use it initially with their customers. There is no credit card required to sign up. If you like it, then it is a matter of just paying subscription fees for our Hubs and the integrations to the endpoints, what we call “Elements”. Then essentially, that model scales as the company grows.

“If you are having trouble keeping up with all of the cloud services that your customers are demanding, then Cloud Elements can help you expand your app’s integrations at a fraction of the cost and time of custom development.”

- Mark Geene

CEOCFO: Do many people resist once they have used it?

Mr. Geene: No! Once our integrations are built into live production of an application, it’s not up to the developer, it’s up to the end users and if they are adopting the integrations. If our customer’s customers love the integration, then the developer sees the true value. Once they are using our integrations we find that there is a tremendous amount of interest in additional integrations.

CEOCFO: How do you reach out? How are you growing the business? Is a lot of it word of mouth?

Mr. Geene: Yes. The majority of our growth has come from inbound, companies finding us on the web by searching for one of the APIs that we offer. Most of our customers have really come to us. That has continued to be what we provide; good valuable content for a developer to help them be productive in any integration that they are doing. Then when they search for something about those integrations on the Internet, they often find us.

CEOCFO: Do you see potential partnerships being offered through other services that developers might use?

Mr. Geene: Yes. We have been in some discussions with Platform-as-a-Service providers, such as Cloud Foundry. We have also partnered with SendGrid and other tools that are very popular with developers in providing API services.

CEOCFO: Is there a barrier to entry for potential competitors?

Mr. Geene: We have very unique pieces to our technology in terms of our how our Hubs work and the high performance way that we take a normal API call and translate it to a specific endpoint, all at a very high speed. The breadth of our catalog is becoming a significant differentiator as we provide more integration options. For our customers, it is one place to shop for all of the integrations they need. We are an Integration-Platform-as-a-Service, but we are built specifically for software developers, as opposed to internal IT organizations. That focus differentiates us from our competitors.

CEOCFO: Why take notice of Cloud Elements?

Mr. Geene: If you are having trouble keeping up with all of the cloud services that your customers are demanding, then Cloud Elements can help you expand your app’s integrations at a fraction of the cost and time of custom development. It allows your development team to stop being distracted by writing that next integration and to focus on building your application’s unique functionality.