

## Leveraging SharePoint, Consulting and their CM[.app] Product To Solve “Mission-Critical” Business Problems



**Russ Edelman**  
 CEO



**corridor company**

Mission Critical SharePoint

**Business Services**  
**Technology**

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

**BIO:**

Russ is the Founder and CEO of Corridor Company, a software development and consulting company, focused specifically on Microsoft SharePoint and the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) industry for a global clientele. Russ was recognized in the top SharePoint 50 influencers and an AIIM fellow and is an active industry analyst helping to define key industry trends by contributing to media outlets including HBR, CNBC, Huffington-Post, InformationWeek, CIO Magazine, AIIM Communities and KMWorld.

**About Corridor Company**

Corridor Company is a software and consulting company dedicated to leveraging SharePoint to solve mission-critical business problems. Our Business[.app]<sup>™</sup> products provide our global client base with solutions for Contract Management, Proposal Management and Supplier Management while our Extender[.app]<sup>™</sup> products extend and augment SharePoint's native functionality.

**CEOCFO:** Mr. Edelman, would you describe Corridor Company?

**Mr. Edelman:** There are two different dimensions to Corridor. First, I should say that we are all about building technology solutions on top of Microsoft SharePoint. In this capacity, there are two different divisions. First, we build commercial grade products to solve mission-critical business problems. Our flagship product CM[.app] is focused around contract management serving companies wanting to manage the full cycle of contracts, companies like Blue Cross, British Telecom, First Data Corporation and similar organizations. The other side of the business, which is really our heritage, is to help organizations from a consultative perspective to plan out their mission-critical SharePoint deployments. Collectively, it is all about SharePoint. One half is about consulting and the other half is about the products that we build.

**CEOCFO:** Is it divided about fifty / fifty or do you find one area has more growth or more potential than others?

**Mr. Edelman:** Right now it is probably about thirty percent product and the balance is services. A good portion of those services revolve around our product as well. However, there are services, independent of our products, where companies value our SharePoint expertise. We see a trend, which is our goal, to actually move much more towards product sales as we start to build a distribution channel with partners around the globe.

**CEOCFO:** You work with well-known companies. What have you figured out that others have not? Why are they using Corridor?

**Mr. Edelman:** That is a great question and one that you have to contemplate on an ongoing basis with regard specifically to the SharePoint marketplace and of course, more broadly, your company in the marketplace. What I have found that allowed us to differentiate ourselves are two factors. One of these is the products that we are building; they are not what I would refer to as “widget” products. They are not just there to solve a particular functional problem. Our products are about solving what we refer to as a “mission-critical” business problems, from end to end; something where the business actually has a high exposure of risk if it does not address it in a professional and complete manner. That is what we think is our biggest point of differentiation. The other piece too, is that we write and we speak regularly on trends in the industry, in terms of what is taking place. We reflect upon what we are learning in the trenches and then speak out to the community at large, through a variety of publications and at events, about the need to be more aware of how to deploy their SharePoint technologies, how to deal

with change management issues, things that we think can really add value to the ecosystem and help organizations. We find that those are two big points of differentiation.

**CEOCFO:** Would you provide, perhaps, one or two concrete examples of what you have been able to help your clients with that perhaps others have not realized yet?

**Mr. Edelman:** Yes. One example is British Telecom. They purchased our software. They have a number of different divisions around the world. One division in particular is called "Global Services." For that particular group they deal with very large engagements that last multiple years, with other large global companies. These projects typically require that they have ten, twenty, thirty or forty people on a given project. A big part of the project is to make sure that people are staying true to the obligations that have been negotiated into the contract. There is an issue around obligation and risk and opportunity management. Portions of our software have been built to accommodate this important need, which often represents a substantial exposure. That is because, when you write a contract, if you are not compliant with the contract the potential for running into trouble is a significant risk. So our product is uniquely positioned, especially on the SharePoint platform, to really address these requirements. Another example is a big project that we did for Deloitte Consulting. We helped them out in terms of building a massive portal for their M & A (merger and acquisition) activity. They have a very large organization within Deloitte specifically around helping organizations go through M & A activities. In that particular case, what they needed was to set up a dynamic portal for each respective acquisition or merger and be able to provide a full collaborative experience. Therefore, on top of SharePoint again, we built them an environment to support this requirement. This is a case where it was specific for them. We built a specific solution to help them address that issue and that was being used in a global capacity. We finished

that project and then were able to help them in terms of getting to the point where they now support it and start to work with it on their own. Those would be two examples, one contract-related and one non contract-related.

**CEOCFO:** When you are speaking with a company and they are asking for what they want, what is the key to finding out what they really want and what is really needed?

**Mr. Edelman:** We take a look at it and we try to slice it and dice it in a few different ways. The first thing that you have to do is calibrate with the person that you are speaking to. If it is a technologist that you are speaking to you need to be prepared to speak to the appropriate depth level with that technologist. You cannot bring a sales person in who has a high-level understanding and expect to have a meaningful conversation with a technologist. Likewise, if you bring a technolo-

**"Our products are about solving what we refer to as a "mission-critical" business problems, from end to end; something where the business actually has a high exposure of risk if it does not address it in a professional and complete manner."**

**- Russ Edelman**

gist in who cannot speak the language of business to a business person, then oftentimes you are going to fall on a less valuable meeting or session. Therefore, the first thing is calibration with your audience. The next thing that we do which is different, rather than over analyzing, we come in with a discreet number of options for our clients. We find that if you provide too much it is very quickly overwhelming. Unfortunately (and understandably), there is a "distaste" for consulting. Therefore, what we try to do is provide tangible options with concrete deliverables that people can wrap their heads around. Then, they can make decisions between option A or option B or maybe it is a little bit of an option A and option B, but now the customer is more in control and has more visibility and awareness in terms of which path they can pursue. Our job as trusted advisor is to come back to them and say, "If you go with option A here are the associated risks and

benefits associated. Likewise with B: here are the risks and benefits."

We are also huge advocates with these enterprises of not actually trying to "boil the ocean." We speak intensely about taking some smaller "baby steps," to the point where we have introduced the phrase "business releases." When you go through a process of deploying any technology, there are so many different elements to it beyond the technology: the change management pieces and the organizational structure. You want to immerse people in it a bit more slowly rather than having them go for a full plunge. Those things we find make a difference in terms of helping people and companies become more successful.

**CEOCFO:** How do you reach potential customers?

**Mr. Edelman:** When we look at our sales and market activities we really divide them, at least for internal purposes, into what we refer to as inbound and outbound marketing. On the outbound marketing side of things we will target our Business Applications. What particular market segments, what communities, what industries, what associations and publications can we reach out to where there would be support for us to market and sell our wares. We will market across the country. It might be events, it might be seminars, webinars or conferences that we will participate in to get our name out there. We will also deal with different events locally with a few key strategic partners, because there are a few technologies that we actually resell. Microsoft is of course a strategic partner for us so we will work different types of events with them. We find that the webinar series are gentle reminders, coupled with a new newsletter that is coming out with just a few soft touch points, that we believe will continue to drive the momentum behind our services and product offerings.

The inbound marketing is something that involves our pursuits as thought leaders. We write pretty regularly in

different publications and speak at different conferences. On the writing side it will include writing for Information Week, CIO Magazine, Huffington Post, CNBC and other such publications. We also speak at different conferences that are germane to the industries that we serve. There are SharePoint conferences, there are contract management conferences and there are other like conferences that we will speak at. We believe that our giving back and communicating to different communities also serves as an awareness vehicle and establishes us as subject matter experts. It pushes us to think harder about the kind of message that we share with people and how we can add value.

**CEOCFO:** Giving back is important to Corridor. Would you tell us a little bit about why and where you focus your efforts?

**Mr. Edelman:** There are a few pieces to it. There is the benevolent piece of what our business is about where we actually give back to charities, from the Make a Wish Foundation to the program over at Life Is Good and a variety of others from local organizations such as police, firemen, and military and so on. We are continually trying to give back in these capacities. In terms of giving back to the community at large with regard to our industries, what we find is that there are two pieces to it. There is certainly marketing value. I would be foolish to dispute that that does not positively impact us. The other piece is that I really try push our consultants as well as myself to step outside of our comfort zones, step outside of our boundaries to write and speak when the consultants might not have. It is uncomfortable. However, we are here to help and guide and provide some leadership in that area and get people to a place where they can feel comfortable about articulating a particular position. Also, to use speaking and writing as a vehicle to learn new things. What will happen with some of our folks is that they will blossom. They might not have actually brushed up yet on a particular area of technology, so they use either an article or blog or speaking engagement as an opportunity to ramp up on something. We find that it

is a great way to give back. It is a great way to build confidence. It is a great way to expand someone's horizons in terms of writing as well as building their social awareness and social presence and their own reputation. For all of those reasons we find that it has been a smart way to go.

**CEOCFO:** How has the company changed as it has grown? What have you learned over time that makes Corridor a better company today?

**Mr. Edelman:** There are a few things at the macro level. The first of which is that when you are selling a solution or a product you need to be working with a technology platform that is of interest to people. We had a bad experience in the past where we were working with a technology that at one point was very hot and then, just by virtue of market conditions and how the platform progressed, interest in it started to wane. We continued to ride on that horse. We found that people really liked our expertise, but they were uncomfortable with the platform. So while at one point the platform was a phenomenal success globally, it started to go downhill in terms of perception. Therefore, I think maintaining awareness of who the players are and what the right platforms are to work with becomes a crucial part of what we do and SharePoint is one example. By going to SharePoint we found a platform that companies continue to embrace and that has been a good vehicle. That is one macro point. The other macro point as much as everyone says it: it is just so much about the people. It is about the culture and the environment that we build. It is an ongoing struggle to find and cultivate good people. I think that we have a great group here and we just continue to build it and grow. It has been exciting and phenomenal to see the people who evolved as leaders really grow in that capacity. It has been unbelievable to see some of the younger people come in and step up in ways that you would not have anticipated. The synergy and energy that has come from that is just electric. You walk into the office and people are just buzzing... It is a really exciting time. If you couple that with the feedback from our clients

in terms of what they like and it is a neat place to be right now.

**CEOCFO:** What is ahead?

**Mr. Edelman:** For us, what we envision is a number of different things. Number one, we continue to evolve our product line. We built the product on a contract management foundation. What is now happening is that we are broadening our product. We are in the process right now of releasing complimentary products that we believe will be equally successful, one for supplier management and the other for proposal management. We are going to continue to broaden the different products that we offer. It is very exciting. We are now also looking at going international in the terms of expansion for partners as well as establishing offices around the world. For us that part is very exciting. On the team and on the staffing side of things we are actually in the process of building up more of a boot camp for the employees, so we can get people up to speed as quickly as possible. That part is exciting in terms of being able to cultivate different folks and grow them in a way that they can quickly become as productive as possible and feel like they are really making a difference. That is the big picture plan for us.

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

**Mr. Edelman:** I sum it up in a few different areas. Point number one is that SharePoint is an incredibly hot market. There is just tremendous opportunity right now. For companies that are able to distinguish themselves in terms of really adding true business value on top of the platform, we believe the opportunities are unlimited. SharePoint has also become a very mission-critical platform. We believe that business applications on top of SharePoint that solve mission-critical problems are well positioned in terms of differentiation. We also believe that the noise that we have been able to make out in the industry and the public awareness of our company continues to grow and is pretty substantive. I think we have some world-class

clients on board and new clients continue to come in. That allows us to differentiate ourselves. Our solutions are not just for a small piece of an enterprise; our products and expertise

solve things that really matter to the business. We have built up development offices. We have them in Belarus as well as Viet Nam and then here in the United States. Their activity

continues to grow and so it is an exciting time for us. We have got great business and technical insights and that continues to be of interest to many organizations.

---



**corridor** company

Mission Critical SharePoint

# **Corridor Company**

**200 Harvard Mill Square**

**Wakefield, MA 01880**

**United States**

**781.229.9933 or 888.377.9933**

**[www.corridorcompany.com](http://www.corridorcompany.com)**