

As a leading provider of Managed, Private Hosting Solutions for Microsoft® SharePoint, Fpweb.net is allowing their Small to Medium-Sized Enterprise And Fortune 100 Customers to Take Control over their Server

**Technology
Cloud**

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**Rob LaMear IV
Founder & CEO**

BIO:

Rob LaMear IV is CEO & Founder of Fpweb.net. He started Fpweb.net from scratch and believes that the key to success has been its people and the energy they bring, hands down. He has been with SharePoint since its inception and his passion for customer care and delivering a premium product has set a new standard in SharePoint Hosting. As much as he likes work and technology, LaMear loves spending time with his family

completely unplugged and has never missed an opportunity to join a pickup game of soccer in the park.

About Fpweb.net:

Fpweb.net is a leading provider of managed, private hosting solutions for Microsoft® SharePoint.

What Sets Fpweb.net Apart? We are 100% SharePoint!

Since SharePoint's inception, Fpweb.net, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, has been a leading SharePoint hosting provider, including being the very first to host the Microsoft® platform in 1999. Fpweb.net's SharePoint Cloud success is grounded in the unmatched level of experience, dedication and unrivaled expertise that is trusted by customers in over 80 countries.

The difference is in the customization. Only Fpweb.net can give you the flexibility to take total control over your server and dictate your own architecture, capacity, licensing and integrations. We remain your trusted SharePoint advisors while we manage your SharePoint, offering our expertise and even introducing you to trusted 3rd party vendors who can help you optimize your infrastructure. We take care of SharePoint, so you can take care of business.

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

CEOCFO: Mr. LaMear, would you tell us about Fpweb.net?

Mr. LaMear: We do SharePoint hosting. We are a SharePoint cloud provider.

CEOCFO: Who is using your services? Is there a common thread among your customers?

Mr. LaMear: Yes. Typically, they are small to medium-sized enterprises, but we do have certain lines of business within the Fortune 100s as well.

CEOCFO: Would you explain how the service works?

Mr. LaMear: It is really a simple concept that has been going on for quite some time and that is getting one of your servers out of your own closet or data center and letting someone else take care of it. We do exactly that for SharePoint. Someone can buy the service from us on a subscription model and we take care of everything for the customer so they can just use SharePoint and focus on their business.

CEOCFO: Are most companies today outsourcing and looking to move everything out of their own domain or do you still find resistance?

Mr. LaMear: There are three barriers to hosting on the cloud; those being security, reliability and performance. They are still very "top of mind" for several decision makers today. Those things need to be talked through and the cloud is not the right sort of solution for all things. That is where you start getting into a discussion about a hybrid model. Certain things do work very well in the cloud.

CEOCFO: How do you reach potential customers?

Mr. LaMear: We actually did quite a bit of education around where the cloud makes sense, because there is a lot of misinformation and marketing jargon going on about hosting on the cloud. It is very confusing, even for the end user on an iPhone to figure out that world. There are all the apps and people do not know exactly where to go or what to use. Therefore, we really do a lot of education, going out to SharePoint forums and technology forums and speaking in front of people to answer hard questions.

CEOCFO: What are some of the biggest misunderstandings that you are able to point out to people and to potential customers? Where does it make sense? How do you get people to understand? What is the “aha moment” when you are presenting directly to a client?

Mr. LaMear: I think the “aha moments” are that all of these technology platforms; whether it is SharePoint or anything else you are using at the office, is that they are not easy to run. I think that we as a consumer, often-times forget on how truly expensive it is to make these things work. That opportunity cost that is lost by trying to manage some of these things ourselves really slows down your business and ability to compete; not with your neighbor in another state, but now in a truly global environment. Therefore I think that is where the “aha moment” is. Talk to an engineer and see what they are actually trying to do right now and they are in a very difficult place. That is because we are asking them to innovate and do special things that make us competitive and give us an advantage. Then on the other hand we are saying, “We are going to slice your budget by ten percent this year. Try and get that done for us.”

CEOCFO: Fpweb.net is a Microsoft Gold certified partner. What sets you apart from the competition? What have you figured out that is better, cheaper, faster, easier or more efficient? Why use Fpweb.net?

Mr. LaMear: It really comes down to the people. This is our differentiator. We are going to continue to invest in the right people for our customers. I know we have the best people working on SharePoint in the world. I can say that we are a very small but extremely smart group of people that care, top to bottom. We are not a good fit for everyone and we tell people that when we are not. We take on more of an advisory role, much different than commodity providers that are just selling some of these Microsoft multi-tenant services. That is really the big differentiator for us. It is that we are very, very good at what we do, we care and we are going to talk to you and find out how hosted SharePoint can make or save you more money.

CEOCFO: Would you give us a concrete example of how that plays out in

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reality to really understand how the philosophy gets translated into action or interest?

Mr. LaMear: A recent example is where we had been courted by a large bio science company to do some work for them. What was happening with them was their own environment internally was growing more and more complex. The IT group was not able to keep up with the demands of the business. Therefore, that IT group reached out to us to manage that SharePoint platform. Like everything, the transition certainly had some bumps in the road. However, once we got through those we are hearing great things from, not only the IT group, but now the business units themselves, saying that IT is able to respond to us faster internally. That is because they do not have to manage the platform itself. I think that is a very nice, real and concrete example.

Now they are able to use SharePoint as a platform and not worry about the infrastructure itself.

CEOCFO: You have released a new partnership program. Would you tell us how that works?

Mr. LaMear: The partnership program really speaks primarily to two groups of people. One is the ISVs of the Independent Software Vendors. Those are folks who are actually writing software that sits on top of SharePoint. They have their own challenges right now, with other platforms in the cloud essentially being revamped too quickly to where they do not have lead time to make sure their product is going to work in the Cloud. That is an interesting dilemma. What we do for that is we actually stabilize those environments and we only update when they or the customer says that it is okay. The other one is the system integrator. The integrator is actually in charge of stitching all of these systems together for people out there. These are the folks who actually come into your office and set up PCs and work on your network and make it talk to other systems. These folks are also stuck in a place where they are still trying to keep customers

happy, but the customers are driving them to the cloud. Therefore, they do not necessarily know what to do. That is where we are helping them create this road map for their customers. Diving down into the partners details a little bit, we can take people ad hoc, but the bottom line is that we do not compete with SharePoint consultancies or integrators. This is the important part. We need our partners to maintain that relationship with the customers and be on the ground working with them; because that is not what we do. We are the “glue” and we will keep things up and running. However, we need someone interfacing with the customer and that is why we need good partners.

CEOCFO: How do you insure that your partners can do the technical part, but also project the image that

you want for people working with Fpweb.net?

Mr. LaMear: That is a great question. That has definitely changed over the past two years, when we accepted all people reselling our solutions. That is not the best fit for us, because the customer experience does not always go well for them or deliver the level of service that Fpweb.net is providing. Therefore, there is a much more thorough process to adding people to our partner programs. We are extremely picky about who we bring in now, if that makes sense.

CEO CFO: How do you get a sense of who are the right partners?

Mr. LaMear: We look for the same things that we want out of our own teams hear at Fpweb.net. One, we want them to be a very sharp group and think outside the box and not necessarily just take what vendors are saying for granted. Then the second part is that they need to care about the customer. That is probably the biggest disqualifier. Some people are really caught up in driving revenue and not really meeting customer needs. Those are the two big ones. If they are doing something in a particular vertical on the SharePoint platform and if we find that very attractive for our customers, we will reach out. We have a customer right now, a partner, working on some security encryptions, which we find very interesting. We think that by leveraging that and putting that encryption solution in our private cloud, federal, healthcare and some of these energy customers may find it useful in keeping their data secure and compliant.

CEO CFO: Are there industries that you would like to have more involvement with?

Mr. LaMear: Yes. Federal is one where we get a lot of interest in, but we have not had a very compelling story to go there. The other issue, obviously, is there is the sequestration right now going on with those folks, so we are waiting to see how that all settles out. However, Federal is in need of security and needs the cloud to spin faster and cut costs. That is one area. However, we are very strong in healthcare, energy and pharma as well.

CEO CFO: What is your geographic reach today?

Mr. LaMear: We are in about sixty-five countries, globally. We have a strong percentage in North America and Europe. We are in Australia and we do have some folks in the Far East.

CEO CFO: Are there areas, geographically, that you would like to have more involvement in or that you are planning to work on getting greater penetration?

Mr. LaMear: We have three going on. Latin America and South America are just organically growing, but we do have some language barriers there. What is making sense for the US SharePoint market is also mirrored in nearby Canada. Germany has some data sovereignty issues and we know that they need some SharePoint help there; the UK as well. I could see in the near future, those two markets being tapped and then probably Latin and South America.

CEO CFO: How is business these days?

Mr. LaMear: It is still very reactive to the market. It is not, nor do I think it will ever be, like it was five years ago. People are very cash conscious, as

we are in our own business. It seems like the general consensus is shorter terms on contracts and you need a higher level of service. We are fine with all of those things. However, it is just a much different environment. The last thing that I think is really telling now is that very seldom do you have one decision maker involved in an IT decision now, it seems like you have three or four that need the right information and need to sign off on a project.

CEO CFO: Why should investors and people in the business community be paying attention to Fpweb.net?

Mr. LaMear: We have an extremely exciting future and an opportunity to serve the business world and that is global. Fpweb.net is pivoting, which I think is exciting for others to understand. More than just hosting, we are going to manage SharePoint wherever it lives. What that means is that some people are not comfortable with the cloud and we are going to be okay with that. Therefore, if you want to leave it on-premises that is fine. We can still manage SharePoint for you. Also, if you decide to go Microsoft hosted, such as Office 365 or Microsoft Azure, we can also manage SharePoint on those platforms. Then, of course we can also care for it in our own private Cloud at Fpweb.net. Therefore, it is not going to be about whether the cloud is right for you; it is going to be about "are you using SharePoint and would you like Fpweb.net to take care of it."



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