

## Platform for Early Stage Companies and Entrepreneurial Communities providing Sales, Marketing, Investment Assistance or Looking for Acquisition, Merger and Management Buyouts



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Interview conducted by:  
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**CEOCFO:** *Mr. Cruise, what is Iron Door, Inc?*

**Mr. Cruise:** Iron Door is a software company focused on bringing together communities of innovative entrepreneurs that require support, for example assistance in sales, marketing and investment to succeed in a highly competitive space. We typically focus on companies that are early stage that are looking to consolidate, aggregate and become part of our focus on the areas that are typically referred to as digital disruption or disruptive types of solutions. In particular we are focused on companies that help and enable management of the **digital corner**.

**CEOCFO:** *When you say “bring together”, are you talking about mergers?*

**Mr. Cruise:** We could be talking about acquisition, merger, management buyouts, partnerships etc; our focus is the first three, acquisition, merger and management buyouts. We will partner in some cases, but our goal is to bring together technologies that would typically not survive stand alone, so we bring them into larger platform services, into consolidation with other technologies that are supplementary or complimentary, particularly in the areas of security, public safety, first responders and that type of customer community.

**CEOCFO:** *How do you evaluate what a company or what a person has to offer so that you can look at potential combinations? What goes into the evaluation process?*

**Mr. Cruise:** We have coined or developed a phrase that we like to call the **digital corner**. It is really the inflection point within the public safety, first responder, and security communities when they begin to deal with the reality of disruptive digital technologies; whether that is mobile devices or infrastructure that enables the access points, whether they are in-car commuting or using PCs, laptops, traditional viewing screens or mobile devices. Therefore, that inflection point for leaders within our customer community is what we refer to as the **digital corner**. You are either in a position to navigate the **digital corner** because you have been thinking about digital transformation and digital disruption, or you swerve off the relevance road. Look at what Uber has done to Taxi companies, or what Netflix and Amazon Prime have done to cable. In many cases there are do-nothing strategies. In other instances they are only partially dealing with the issue.

The first thing that we look for are companies, entrepreneurs and inventors that are focused on disruptive technology, delivering a user experience improvement. Therefore, things that are close to the device, things that are enabling the community of users to do new things. If you think of social media tools, if you think of actual applications or mobile apps, if you think of tools that mobilize content or mobilize secure data, those are the areas that we focus on and I would say that we evaluate in that order.

Number one is practicality. Is it disruptive technology? Is it focused close to the device? Is it about mobilizing data to the devices or the viewing screen? Is there an AI component to that? How does the intelligence work? That is literally the gate that we need to get past before we start looking at any type of evaluation. I am not as concerned with, "Do you have customers, do you have successful pilots or are there projects?" I am more concerned with the thought process around the technology and where it has the potential to be applied. From an evaluation stand point, that is what we are looking at. It is things in this consideration that really are focused on the disruptive technology that enables enterprises and/or public organization to manage the **digital corner**.

**CEOCFO: Are you actively looking or are people turning to you and saying "here is my idea, what can I do with it," or both?**

**Mr. Cruise:** We are relatively new in this format. We are in our twelfth month right now. We all have different strengths. As for my personal background, I worked as an executive at Adobe for 10+ years. I worked in the creative spaces on the business side dealing with mobility, mobilization, digital marketing and others.

Our vision is to help companies, from a business standpoint, get their ideas to market and help them be successful. If we consider what is happening, there is so much technology innovation. The statistics of companies that reach milestones in either engineering or development beyond those entrepreneurs that are investing and just really getting off the ground are challenging. It is so hard to get to market. It is so hard to get venture capital funding. It costs so much to get sales and marketing and business advice. We are inserting a disruptive model to that early stage arena by not only providing the potential capital in really early stages, angel seed investments etc. but more significantly we are bringing expertise to do product marketing, development of sales channels and methodologies and a network of communities, so that the team that we have assembled can make a differentiated impact.

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We are not engineers, but are highly astute business people that have been working deeply, for decades collectively, in technology fields for the security side, law enforcement, first responders and others. We have put together a fully disruptive model. We are not coming trying to buy up these companies or kill the entrepreneurs or do typical venture capital or private equity investments. We are coming with solutions to say, "For a part of this business idea, we will help you get acquired. We will integrate that into a larger solution, whether it is ours or others." It is a really interesting model that we have put together that is razor sharp focused on helping ideas that are disruptive get to market.

**CEOCFO: How do you help an entrepreneur who has created something and is reluctant to give up any control?**  
**Mr. Cruise:**

Part of the challenge with most entrepreneurs is what you just described. It is not true with everyone, but as you astutely pointed out there are many folks that have great ideas and have done a lot of development and grown their business to a certain point. There is this reluctance to have someone new participate in the equity side of the company. The thing that I look for and differentiates part of our process, and what might be a little bit of a change is that I am looking for those entrepreneurs that are really interested in accomplishing something better than good, something exciting and something fun! I am not looking for someone who is closed-minded, who perhaps has either a restrictive personality or who is unwilling.

That is part of the evaluation process. I approach you in the early stage and identify if there is a lack of that desire; that is probably not the right person. Ultimately, I believe that the market today has very significant opportunities. Again, I believe that there are many new ways to be able to get technology to market, leveraging social and industry associations and many really cool methodologies. If you fundamentally do not want help from someone you are probably not the right person in the context of aggregating your solution with something bigger and creating larger services, larger products and larger packages. Ultimately larger rewards.

**CEOCFO: Are people becoming more comfortable with grouping services together; the idea that there is always another piece that might make sense to combine or are the developers, the entrepreneurs, not quite there?**

**Mr. Cruise:** I would say to you that our first successful company or one of the ones that I think is really taking shape is a company called Oproma ([www.oproma.com](http://www.oproma.com))

Oproma is an innovative data management company that has done very well building itself to a solid revenue stream, getting their products to market, developing a solution that is focused within the data management, data movement space. To the point of your question, part of the criteria is really finding that personality that has pride in ownership and has a passion for what they have done and are looking to do something greater. I think that when you find that person it is obvious and I think that type of personality is the person that responds to our methodology.

We have a business methodology that we call MAPS. It showcases how we leverage MAPS and we use MAPS to create a recipe for success. I think that when you find the person that has the right personality it is obvious. I would say to you that far more often than not, over the last couple of months as we have begun to get our messaging out and now are starting to get exposed to entrepreneurs, they all have the same problem. There are variations of them; *"I have gotten to this stage, I am not sure what to do next, I am having trouble selling, my message is a little confusing, people tell me I have something really good, can you help me with these things?"*

Oddly, most often than not, venture capital or cash or other things might not actually be the priority need. I would tell you that most of my conversations have been around sales and marketing. *"How do talk about my products so that someone will understand within fifteen seconds, thirty seconds; elevator pitches,"* a lot of the basic things that unless you have experience and expertise, they do not come naturally to the entrepreneur. Those are the people that are really most interested, because within a few minutes we can establish a lot of credibility. We come from a background in proven ability in these endeavors, and that is the critical value add.

**CEOCFO: Would you tell us about the Iron Door MAPS, Mobilized Acceleration Platform as a Service?**

**Mr. Cruise:**

Part of what we are talking about are a few concepts, that when we articulate them they are a type of revelation, but they really have already been talked about for quite some time and we are just bringing some greater clarity to it. For the **digital corner**, as an example; people talk about digital transformation and digital disruption. To us, the **digital corner** is a decision point and it is an action that has to be taken within a customer environment. Therefore, we communicate about digital transformation. We communicate about digital disruption and then we ask, "Where is your corner? How far are you away from it? Are you there already because of competitive pressure? Is it something you have a bit of time to plan for or have you missed it?"

When you socialize these concepts, it is at a decision point that is either past you, is looming or is a little further out. MAPS is the methodology that we use to sit down and kind of lay out where you are. When you use the MAPS methodology it really clarifies, from a business, and marketing perspectives where your gaps are.

Let me give you a good example. Many companies go to Salesforce right away and start automating their sales process. However, if you step back the reality is that oftentimes that comes with putting sales resources into the field. If you ask most entrepreneurs, "Why did you put a salesperson into the field," they will say, "I want to sell." However, have they actually stepped back and looked at the awareness and knowledge levels needed to be able to create suspects and prospects within a sales pipeline and have you started generating that. That is because you may be applying a salesperson three months or six months too early, because you have not done any of the other stages. Therefore, the mobilization part is really about rethinking the way that you are looking at the business and applying investments and resources at the right stages when the maturity process requires it. This is where MAPS is so valuable.

This is a huge mistake that is really made in early stage companies. Looking at the business, you might not need salespeople today. Maybe you need five. However, unless you create the plan from MAPS and start to actually marry your realities together, it actually allows you to accelerate getting to market, getting your message out, getting it out to the right people at the right stages and then being able to marry other resources and investments at the right points in time.

We call it a Platform as a Service because we are really coming in with this model saying, "We want to help you mobilize your resources, become more efficient and effective, understand the entire process from awareness, knowledge, likes and preferences, suspects to prospect, lead, pipeline and forecast. It is a whole set of stages that together entrepreneurs, most often than not, do not really understand. Therefore, MAPS is about mobilization of what you are doing. It is about accelerating how and when you are doing the right things and really, it is all about us as a service, participating in, again, acquisition, participating in a management buyout, participating in an integration or a merger or whatever makes sense based on the business.

**CEOCFO: *When you are evaluating a company or a technology, if you are not sure which way do you go? Do you take it on or leave it go?***

**Mr. Cruise:** Do you know what the fun part is? How do I participate in the industry if I am not a risk taker at heart? I come from a twenty five year background in selling and marketing very successfully across organizations that are highly skilled in this space. The reason I left the comfort of that role and the comfort of that arena is because I actually enjoy the risk/reward dynamic. Risk/reward is a synergistic approach.. Therefore, I would suggest, more often than not I am more prepared to take sensible, calculated risks. I do not ask for entrepreneurs to give us money. We are never in a situation where we bill out as consultants. That is not part of our model. We do not actually generate any money from any of our clients. What we are really looking to do is participate. We look to become partners through the acquisition model, through the management buyout model and through the merger model. We want to participate and bring our rich skills to the table using our MAPS methodology and the expertise of the entrepreneurs or businesses, so that we all accelerate and get through it. I enjoy succeeding through risk/reward decisions

**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about IronDoor being recognized by Branham as an up and coming company?***

**Mr. Cruise:** The interesting part is that Branham Group is a well-established organization in Canada. They have got a well-deserved reputation for their research and the work that they do across the country. They have been very successful at early identification of Canada's most innovative and successful start-ups (eg Radius 6 and Shopify). I have been following Branham for two decades. As a leader at Adobe and in other roles I often look to that list for guidance. Being recognized on the top twenty-five up-and-comers list is a reflection of some of the work that we have already done and some of the successes that we have brought to the table in terms of the entrepreneur community. It is also a validation of the fact that what we are doing is a needed set of resources and tools within a community that is hungry for this type of support and starving for that type of model that does not drain the precious cash available to build and manage the business.

I am really proud of the fact that we have been so recognized already. I am more excited about the fact that it is just yet another validation of the opportunity in the global market to do this. There are more and more companies and there are some other companies that are looking at this type of model. It is getting away from tradition via straight up VC, Angel or other investments. We are not just bringing the potential for that, but we are bringing an entire team and proven methodology to this pursuit. It is a ready-made sales team or marketing or technology evaluation; whatever needs to be done, we have those resources available and that is what we bring to the table.

