



### Custom Software Developers and Consultants building Web Applications for Startups, SMBs and Large Corporations



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**"We are trying to create a special place and we want to share it with more people, so the more people that now about us, the better!" - Darrin Jahnel**

**CEOCFO: Mr. Jahnel, what is the Jahnel Group, Inc?**

**Mr. Jahnel:** We are a custom software development shop. When companies need a web application, something that they cannot buy off the shelf, they will come to us and we will build it for them. If you need a CRM system you might use Salesforce, or something bigger companies can buy off the shelf. But if there is something that is really specific to their business and really different, they'll need customer software. That is when they call us in. We will help them that way, building the entire thing or sometimes we will supplement their team. Maybe they already have a team but they need some more fire power and they need a couple developers and a project manager. We will come alongside them. Sometimes we will just test the application. Usually, we are working with custom software and custom web applications for mid-sized to large companies.

**CEOCFO: On a very basic level, what do you understand at the Jahnel Group about software development that less experienced people may not grasp?**

**Mr. Jahnel:** Like any trade, the more experience you have the better. We have 44 people on the team now, but if you added up all of the experience it is in the hundreds of years. We have built so many different web applications and we have gone into almost every problem or a version of every type of problem. Therefore, when we hit problems we know exactly how to go about solving them. We might not know the answer at that point, but we know how to go about finding it. Then the other thing that I really think many new people do not understand is that getting the application to about 90% done, when you say, "We are almost done;" that is the easy part. It is getting it over the hump, that last ten percent, finishing the thing, making sure all the bugs are out, getting it production and making sure that all the users are happy; it is getting the ball across the goal line where a lot of people stumble. I think that we are very good at it because we are so disciplined and focused and we have been around the block so many times.

**CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of what you might find at the end? Where are some of the areas that turn out to be troublesome?**

**Mr. Jahnel:** When you are working on an application and building it, you start out in a development environment. It resides on your own server that developers control and everything is easy; now they demo the software and show the client and everyone is happy. However, the application actually needs to run on the clients' server, so then the developers push it over to the client's server, but then they realize, "There is actually an extra level of security over here and there is a firewall that we did not know about and this has to integrate with their active directory." I do not want to get too nerdy, but there are a lot of "gotchas" once you try to do it for real on the client's network, where you will say, "This was working on

our server in our office,” but now it’s not working”. We have experience with a plethora of issues so we are ready and expecting them. When we hit them we usually know how to navigate around them.

**CEOCFO: *Why is it so hard, in general, to get it right?***

**Mr. Jahnel:** I have a very clear answer that I believe in one hundred percent! It is just simply because there are so many variables. For example, a plumber knows how to fix my sink. There are only 20 to 50 variables he needs to worry about. I am just making that number up, but in software the number of variables is in the thousands. That is because it depends on what kind of operating system you have, what kind of browser you are using, what versions you have, are you running anti-virus, do you have a firewall, etc. I could go on and on and on. The number of variables is literally in the thousands. Therefore, even when you have written a really solid application and you have tested it like crazy you can only test so much. There is no way to test all of the different paths because there are so many different variables. That is really where you run into problems and I feel like that is where a lot of users of software get extremely frustrated and rightfully so. “I paid money; I just want this thing to work.” However, when you are on the inside, building it, you start to see that there are so many things that could go wrong.

**CEOCFO: *How do people know when they need something custom? How do you help a company decide if they really do or perhaps they might want to go with something already available?***

**Mr. Jahnel:** All of our work and everything that we do comes through relationships. We don’t invest in sales or marketing. Usually, right off the bat they are saying, “We need some help with this, we have this problem that we need to solve and can we just start with a meeting?” We will conduct a fact finding session where we work with them and we try to help them navigate those waters. There have been many times where we say, “If we build this thing that you want we are going to charge you half a million dollars. However, there is a tool that is off the shelf here, that you should get for five hundred dollars a month that does almost everything that you want it to do and you should go in that direction.” We have actually talked ourselves out of work many times. Then sometimes people have already tried the off the shelf product or they have tried to hack something together and they just realize, “This is just not working for us.” Maybe it has been years of frustration and they are finally fed up and ready to make a change. It is usually something that is mission critical and revenue critical. If it is just a back-office thing that is just annoying to a few people, rarely do they spend the money. However, once it is revenue critical and it is affecting how fast they can move and make money, if they have been frustrated in the past, then they will say, “We want to build this exactly the way we want it.” Sometimes it is an initial meeting as soon as they realize the issue. Then sometimes they come to us, usually after years of frustration trying other stop gaps.

**CEOCFO: *Given a choice, are there certain types of projects you prefer, either personally or as a company?***

**Mr. Jahnel:** Yes, absolutely! We are actually finally at a point now where we can pick and choose our projects. In the early days we would have done anything. We probably would have mowed your lawn if you needed it! However, now we can pick and choose. We are definitely looking for longer term projects if possible. We are looking for projects where we can use the technology stack that we like to use. We have many young developers. Developers are very hard to hire these days and they want to work on the coolest stuff. When I say coolest, I mean coolest from a nerd prospective, and I do not say nerd in a negative way! We refer to ourselves as nerds here and we are proud of it! They want to work on the cooler cutting edge technologies, so that is definitely something that we prefer. If a company comes to us and they have an old mainframe system and they want us to work on it we will try to shy away from that. Then another thing that we really value that probably a lot of other companies do not is that we want to work



with fun people. We want to work with clients that are easy to get along with, that are happy, that laugh, that have fun, because that is our culture here at our company. Sometimes we have been in business with clients that are just not happy. They are never happy. Every single day they are upset and it is not a fun way to work. Therefore, we are trying to find the people that are a fit personality wise as well.

**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us a little bit about your culture? Did you know what you wanted the atmosphere to be or did you realize over time what makes sense for you and for Jahnel?***

**Mr. Jahnel:** I would say a little bit of both. My brother and I started this company and as the CEO I am just a silly guy. I have always been laughing and joking and I am just a happy guy! God blessed me with a good personality and a positive outlook on life! Therefore, I always knew that when we ran a company that it would be about that; about having fun while we are working hard and doing great work. I want to make sure that people have a place to come where they do not feel that feeling of dread on Sunday night. You know that feeling you get on Sunday night? “Oh, the weekend is over; I have to go to work tomorrow.” I have not had that feeling in over a decade! That is the greatest gift you could ever have. I like to think that our employees also do not have that dreaded feeling on a Sunday night, because we have created a place that is fun to come to and something that they really like. Then over time we figure out what works in terms of that end goal. That was always the goal from the beginning. Then again, we challenge what works. Does flex-time work, does travel and making trips down to New York City work, what do the people really want. Sometimes we think they want something and they actually end up wanting something else! I thought everyone wanted their own office. They do not want that. They want to sit together, for example. They want to sit together in open workspaces. I do not like open workspaces, so I always assumed that they didn’t either. That is just an example of something that we have learned over time.

**CEOCFO: *How do you stay ahead of technology and ahead of security, or at least keep up?***

**Mr. Jahnel:** You cannot really keep up. A key part of our hiring is that we have to hire people that have that nerd gene, that are nerds deep down and they just love this stuff! I need a guy who, when he goes home, he is going to read a blog about the new Microsoft update or something like that; something that a “normal” person would never do. That is who we need to hire. We have created a culture where we have a team of all those types of people. For example, one guy comes in and says, “Hey, did you guys see that Google just updated Chrome and it has got this feature now.” Then that gets one of the other guys interested so he looks that up and then he comes back the next day and he says, “Hey, I was looking into that and I saw this,” and it just really starts to snowball and everyone starts to feed off of each other. You cannot get ahead of it, like you said. However, you can at least keep up by constantly being in the know and attacking it as a team and sharing information in that way.

**CEOCFO: *What is next for the Jahnel Group?***

**Mr. Jahnel:** A big push that we are into right now is that we do a lot of consulting and project work, as I told you. We are building custom software for companies. We get paid either hourly or we get paid by the project. That is a good business. That is how we have grown. That is what pays the bills around here. However, we do have our own products as well and are trying to get those products off the ground, selling subscriptions to our own software products. One of our products is an educational software program called Samson’s Classroom that we created back in the day. That is actually how we started in 2005. We started an educational software company. Samson’s Classroom is for early readers and it had a little bit of success. However, once the consulting and project work got going around 2012, we kind of put that educational software product on the back burner. Therefore, we are trying to breathe some life back into it. We’re trying to create a different revenue stream where we have something that is more steady and subscription based, to supplement our consulting income.

**CEOCFO: *Why now?***

**Mr. Jahnel:** In the beginning it was just a grind every day just to survive and to stay afloat. Now, we have built up a special team. I mentioned we have forty-four people on the team now. We have forty-four stars! That is true. We do not have any dead weight here! Now the team is running like a well-oiled machine and we actually have the bandwidth to take on other projects. We can peel off a team of four or five people and they can work on something on the side and the risk is really low to us. That is because we are only risking their time. I guess we are also risking what they could be billing, but again the machine is rolling to a point where we can absorb that and it is not that much of a risk.

**CEOCFO: *What is the takeaway for our readers? What should they remember about Jahnel Group, Inc?***

**Mr. Jahnel:** I would say that the message is simple. My brother and I run this company with a servant’s mentality. We have devoted our lives to creating a place that is fun to work at, where people can come and start their career, because we have a lot of young people. We have got senior people here as well with years of experience, but this is a great place for young people to come in, start their career, have a fun place to work and be in a place that cares about them more

than anything. That is why Jahnel Group exists. That is why my brother and I have poured our life and heart and soul into this place and we have created this special place! It is really nothing more than that! If we can just keep going and just keep sharing this thing that we have built with more people, then that is all we are trying to do. I guess we are trying to make some money in the mean time, because I would like some money. However, we make decisions every day that put our people first over making extra profit or putting some more money in our pockets. That is it! That is the only message that we really want to share. We are trying to create a special place and we want to share it with more people, so the more people that now about us, the better!



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