

## Customized Software Solutions for Global Supply Chains



**Anand Raghavendran**  
CEO

### **About Netwin Solutions, Inc.**

A leader in global trade management, Netwin Solutions, Inc. specializes in helping companies enhance their supply chains with innovative and customized software solutions.

Netwin collaborates with certified compliance brokers, import managers and international trade managers, who work with retail, manufacturing, electronics, food/beverage, and other industries.

Our custom, state-of-the-art GTKonnect suite of global trade management software is designed to support the needs of self-filing importers/exporters and service providers to improve operational efficiencies through automation, integration and collaboration. Flexible solutions help customers to simplify the process of managing imports, exports and trade agreements.

Our number one goal is to empower our customers to create efficient logistics and customs operations. We do this through robust, easy-to-use global trade management solutions and outstanding support.

We have had many success stories from our world class clients, which include Mattel Inc., Volkswagen of America, Inc., Mitsubishi Motor North America, Inc., DHL Express, Boeing, Johnson & Johnson and several others.

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

**CEOCFO: Mr. Raghavendran, what is the idea and concept at Netwin Solutions?**

**Mr. Raghavendran:** We power global trade management. We are a software company that provides quality products for people involved in import, export and global trade supply chain visibility. That is what we do at Netwin.

**CEOCFO: What is the range of products you offer? What specific segment or what types of companies, other than just the general type of global trade, would be using your services?**

**Mr. Raghavendran:** The products support anyone that is in the GTM business. We have a wide array all the way from visibility to compliance management to providing the content and collaboration for them. We also have products where they can coexist and collaborate with their supply chain partners for gathering information. That is what we do. Import, export, global security and conflict minerals management are some of the product offerings that we provide for the market. Who could be a typical client, was your next question. As we speak today, we service companies across a wide variety of industry verticals. It is going to be a very generic answer, you did not want me to say anyone that is involved in Global trade, but that is the honest and true answer. That is because if you look at our clientele today, we work with companies like DHL and UTI Worldwide who are large service providers. We work with Target, Mattel and other large corporations like Boeing and Johnson and Johnson. These are some of my customers today. As you can see they are across a wide variety of industry verticals. Therefore, we are not restricted to a specific industry or a specific vertical. That is because anyone that has the requirements for importing or exporting is my main prospect.

**CEOCFO: What is it about Netwin Solutions that is encouraging customers to use your service?**

**Mr. Raghavendran:** First and foremost, it is our track record. We have a very successful and long track record in terms of doing what we are doing today. We have gone through a couple of transitions. However, more importantly, even through the transitions our customers continued to stay with us. When we went through an acquisition and came back into the market as a different company, people were ready to come back to us. Therefore, it is the track record and more importantly the service we have provided to companies over those long periods. It is not easy for us to stay in the good books of our customers over a decade and most of our customers have been with us for almost that period of time. I think that sets Netwin Solutions apart from the rest of the market. That is why I think our customers like us; our being available to them when they need us allows us to do what we do. We have to provide quality products. However, more importantly these other aspects: the knowledge, the longevity and service that we provide, I think, sets us apart.

**CEOCFO: *Would you give us an example of how your customer service is a different higher level than most others?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** Any one of my customers, irrespective of their size, irrespective of how much they pay us, can talk to a live person within ten minutes when they pick up the phone and call us. We have provided our personal cell phone numbers to every one of customers, so they could pick up the phone and talk to us. It could typically be a Saturday or a Sunday, where someone is working on bringing an import shipment into this country and it is something unique and either they do not know how to do it because it is the first time they are doing it or it could even be a problem in the system or they way that they are trying to do it. They might not have the instructions. Irrespective of what the situation is, they just call someone and any one of my team members is available to work with them. There are often instances if no one is available, I get called and I personally work with companies when they call over a weekend. For us a customer shipment is the first and foremost thing, besides everything. Therefore, that is what people experience when they work with us.

**CEOCFO: *Do you need to keep on top of the various regulations in the industries and the countries you work with so that you can provide an enhanced offering?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** That is a great question. The answer is yes. We do have to stay on top of changing regulations and we are in an industry where regulations do keep changing quite often. That is our strength, again. For anyone, not just us, anyone that is in the global trade industry, we need to stay on top of regulations across the different countries that we operate in. Therefore, we have a team of people that constantly monitor for such changes. Sometimes these changes could just mean information to customers. Sometimes these changes could mean making changes to our software products. Therefore, we do stay on top of the regulations all of the time, to make sure it does not affect what we provide to the market and when it necessitates a change, we do make those changes. Again, most of these regulatory changes are driven by a timeline that we would have to adhere to. Therefore, it is particularly important that we stay top as soon as it becomes available, so we have the time to plan and make the changes to the software product that we are provide to the market.

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**CEOCFO: *What is the competitive landscape? Are there many companies that provide the in depth solution of Netwin or that claim to provide such an in depth solution?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** The answer is yes. There is a big list of companies and this industry, in my mind, looks quite saturated. At this point there too many providers who all claim to do what we do. However, in terms of us working with the various prospects as we go through RFPs and various selection processes, we have noticed it is ultimately that three or four companies that make it to the final rounds. However, there are too many others in this space that also claim to provide the same services.

**CEOCFO: *When you are talking with a prospective client is there an aha moment when they understand the capabilities or is it really when they are working with you that they can fully understand?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** It is both ways. However, I think most often it is when they work with us. That is because the typical conversations prior to making a sale are one or two hour conversations. Therefore, especially for someone that is brand new that is trying to understand what we do and what we offer, it is really difficult for us to provide the entire breadth of services that we offer. Therefore, conversations are typically restricted to a specific function or a specific module that they are interested in right at that moment. Once they start using it, we also pitch other features and they also realize, they start looking at the product and say, “We could also use this for this or this or something else,” and we say, “Yes, you could.” Normally, we do not talk to that level on initial conversations, because sometimes people get too carried away or it becomes too confusing. Therefore, we tend to keep to the point of their requirements when we talk to them. However, the moment they start using it, the aha moment happens many times. I have also seen it happening during the initial conversations. Then we just throw some pointers at them and say, “You could be doing this as well with this product,” and then they say, “Really? I never thought about it.” That kind of situation happens all the time. For example, we have a product for C-TPAT and supply chain security management. C-TPAT is a US Customs security initiative. The product is designed from a customer’s perspective to handle the C-TPAT program. The concept behind that is we are providing a platform where they can coexist and interact with their supply chain partners, sending and receiving information and validating the information that the partner provides. Therefore, when we show that tool to them and we say, “You are sending the C-TPAT questionnaire to your partner. How often to you also have a need within your organization where someone is supposed to work with the same factory or the same vendor asking them questions about social compliance, asking them questions about the corruption practices within the country etc.” Then they say, “I think we do that all of the time.” Then I say, “You could use the same platform. Create that questionnaire in our platform and you will be able to do the same thing, because it is the same vendor. Now they have a single system to work with and they can provide you the

information.” They say, “Wow, we did not even think about it. We were only looking at it from a C-TPAT perspective, but this is a great idea.” That has always expanded our reach into the company.

**CEOCFO: *How do you ensure ease of use? So many systems claim to be and then when you start to use them they are not. How do you make sure what is intuitive when your developing software is also intuitive for your customer?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** One; it comes with experience. We have done this a long, long time, so we think we understand what the end user is looking for and what the requirements of the end user are. However, more often it is also an iterative process. There are often times where we think, “This is probably going to be the easiest,” and we release something and then we hear back from the end user saying, “This is too difficult to use.” Then we go back to the drawing board and redo it. This has happened a couple of times. However, most times we get the end user engaged from the beginning. That means as we go through development; as we try to create new features, functions and new modules, there is always an end user involvement that is working alongside us saying, “From a business perspective, these are the things that we would really be dealing with.” Therefore, that kind of gets built into the development process. It makes sure, from a usability perspective, that we already are factoring real business needs and not the developer’s needs when we create products.

**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about some of the newer tweaks or newer offerings? How do you decide when to make changes?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** Many times changes to existing products are practically governed by regulatory updates and the changing regulatory landscape forces us to make changes to products. With new products, it is a constant evolution for us. We just try to keep up with the market. For example, our newest offering was for conflict mineral management. It practically has nothing to do with GTM and trade compliance. However, as I said before, we have had this partner relationship framework that people use to interact and collaborate with their partners. When we saw conflict mineral management, we said, “It is very similar to what we do in the C-TPAT where you send out a questionnaire and they provide information back. This is exactly what conflict mineral management is going to be as well.” Therefore, we go into that kind of product offering if we see a relationship with what we do or it could be, as I said, due to regulatory changes. Then there is user feedback. That is one big thing that we always factor in. When we release something and when people start using it and we see that it could have been better done in a different way, we are not afraid to take it back or pull the feature back and redesign it to make more user-friendly.

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

**Mr. Raghavendran:** That is a big challenge for us. We are a growing company. Many times our reach is simply built on references; people talking good about us and people talking about having a great experience working with us and going out to the market and saying good things about us. That is one big factor that helps us. We also reach prospects in industry trade shows. That is our major reach point. We are in trade shows like the AAEI and the ICPA, which are industry specific where the import/export community gathers in larger numbers. That is one kind of primary touch point for us. More often than not, it is the prospect reaching us, rather than us reaching the prospects, using Google searches and other organic things that they do to find companies. About sixty percent of the people who are our customers have come to us rather than us going to them.

**CEOCFO: *What is your geographic reach?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** From a geographic perspective today, we are primarily US focused. All of our customers are US based. While we have products for other geographies, which we are slowly trying to expand into Asia and in Europe and into North America itself, our primary market today is the US.

**CEOCFO: *Do you see that changing? Would you like it to change?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** We would definitely like it to change. At this point, from a strategic perspective, we are looking to be operational at least in a couple of geographies as I said. Asia and Europe are two main targets for us at this point and in the next couple of years.

**CEOCFO: *Why is this the time to target that area?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** That is because one, global economic outlook is changing and it has become a lot more positive. Number two is many companies have started thinking from a global perspective, not from a specific geography. That kind of leads us into a situation where we also have to be available to them in these other geographies. We become a single source or a single point of solution for them, rather than them trying to do it piecemeal. That, I think is going to be more often than not, the requirement of the future. That will put us in a situation where we have to be operational in multiple geographies.

**CEOCFO: *How is business today?***

**Mr. Raghavendran:** Business is good with a very, very positive outlook. We used to be Importers Software and we went through an acquisition. We were out of this space for about five years. Active involvement in the industry was not there

and then we came back to market with GTKonnect. In the last four years we have been active as GTKonnect. However, I think we are probably one of the best products out there in terms of what the market has at this point. Again, it is not me saying it, but I have heard this repeatedly from the market wherever we go. We have widened our reach. Even today, any RFP process that we go through, we invariably end up in the top two. We may not be the winner all of the time, but we are in the top two. It is definitely a very positive situation for us and we have won quite a few opportunities, even in the last couple of months. Therefore, our outlook is very positive and we expect that we will become a leader in this space in the next few years. I think that the greatest strength behind us is our customers. We exist and we continue to grow because of our customers. The great asset that I have, people that have been behind GTKonnect with extensive international trade experience of almost twenty plus years; every individual, the lead group of about ten people. Therefore, we combined about two hundred to three hundred “man years” worth of knowledge that we bring to this space and I think that sets us apart.

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**BIO:** Anand has held various senior management positions with major corporations in the last 14 years, prior to joining Netwin Solutions as its President & COO in June 2008. He was a Senior Manager with UPS Supply Chain solutions and was VP of operations with ISSI where he oversaw software operations supporting a large client base, where he directed his team in managing numerous implementations and training on time and budget.

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