

Single Platform for Data Integration



Pamela Szabo
Founder & CTO

About Stone Bond Technologies

For over a decade Stone Bond has been providing agile technologies for making data available wherever and whenever it is needed, removing the historic barriers that legacy integration products impose. We believe that seamless and agile data integration will be the single most important competitive advantage for business in the next five years.

Business and government face similar challenges with data complexity and timely availability including:

- Constant business change driving rapid access to data.
- Exploding volumes and complexity of data that increase risk and reduce business agility.
- Financial constraints necessitating more cost-effective IT solutions and a faster time-to-value for the investments already made.

Our solution, Enterprise Enabler®, is a single platform that provides an Enterprise Service Layer, Data Virtualization, ETL (Extract, Transform, Load) and full data workflow logic, and complex combinations of those, eliminating 90% of the custom programming typically required. Businesses can quickly configure and deploy solutions, and even more quickly, change them to respond to business opportunities.

Our customers are Fortune 1000 companies across a wide range of industries such as Healthcare, Utilities, Oil and Gas, Hospitality and Financial Service.

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

CEOCFO: Ms. Szabo, what is the concept behind Stone Bond Technologies?

Ms. Szabo: Every company needs to move data, access it, and make sense of it. Unfortunately, the technologies for doing that today in

“More and more companies are realizing that the ability to move and change data throughout the organization easily and quickly is critical to achieving the agility to change directions quickly. They understand that this in turn often results in strong competitive advantage.” - Pamela Szabo

Stone Bond Technologies

**1021 Main Street
Suite 1550
Houston, TX – 77002
713-622-8798
www.stonebond.com**

Fortune 500 companies are fifteen to twenty years old. The concept of Stone Bond is to enable all of those data movement activities with an order of magnitude more ease - essentially bringing the ease of using consumer technologies to accomplish the complex capabilities of ancient middleware. We cover the space of a classic enterprise middleware, but we have the full scope of middleware in a single environment and you can create all kinds of integration in a fraction of the time of doing it with any other technology.

CEOCFO: *What are you able to tell us about the technology that allows you to do what others cannot or do not?*

Ms. Szabo: Instead of going through all of the time-consuming machinations of building classic data integration, you are able to set it up in minutes instead of weeks. The reason is that our platform is a single, cohesive solution that you are just configuring, instead of writing a huge amount of custom programming or scripting across a multitude of different tools. Our design philosophy is that everything that is done more than a handful of times must be automated, and the technical aspects hidden behind the scenes. Even programmers don't want to do the same things over and over.

CEOCFO: *When you are speaking with potential customers, do they understand the difference easily or is it more likely they just care about the end result?*

Ms. Szabo: More and more companies are realizing that the ability to move and change data throughout the organization easily and quickly is critical to achieving the agility to change directions quickly. They understand that this in turn often results in strong competitive advantage. Middleware has been an albatross to corporate agility for so long that one of our challenges is getting potential customers to believe there really is, finally, an alternative that gives the depth and reach without the overhead. Once they see it, the people who understand the discipline, generally "get it," and some just can't wait to get it in their environment solving problems they haven't been able to surmount. Sometime around three years ago the IT Analysts came up with the term "Data Virtualization," a new model of integration, which our technology has always had at its core. Because of that, more people understand what our product is about.

CEOCFO: *Are there particular industries of focus for you, types of companies or sizes of companies?*

Ms. Szabo: We are focused mostly on large companies, Fortune 500, but we also have mid-sized and some small companies. One of the interesting things about our technology is that it does not just scale up, but it scales down because it is all a single product and you just grow things by configuring. We have customers in a wide range of industries such as healthcare, financial services, government, utilities, oil and gas, higher education manufacturing, and others. We started out in the oil industry, which I think is the reason we had a different perspective on integration than those who come from a finance or accounting world.

CEOCFO: *How do you know that you will be able to integrate any new technology or system that comes along? What is the key to accepting anything and everything into your grand plan?*

Mr. Szabo: It really boils down to the core architecture that we have. We have everything so modular that if we come across an endpoint of data either delivering it, packaging it as a standard, or any of the new standards and web services, is just a small layer that needs to be put in for a particular endpoint. We have a completely different technology than other middlewares use for connectivity. We call them "AppComms" to distinguish from the typical connectors or adapters. These are very

intelligent components that, on one hand know intimately how to communicate with whatever the endpoint is. On the other end of it, they know how to take orders from and communicate to the transformation engine that is pulling all the data together. You have this live orchestration happening with all kinds of different types of data sources live with these AppComms knowing how to interact with the data as it flows through. We have never met an endpoint we could not connect to. We have connected to electronic instruments, databases, data warehouses, Big Data, and ERP systems like SAP and on and on.

CEOCFO: *Tell us about implementation. What is involved?*

Ms. Szabo: Of course, it depends on the size of the project, but since it is a single Integrated Development Environment, a person can sit down at the design studio, point to the sources that they are interested in, and select the data they want. They then drag and drop to show how the data is all related, and then package it however they need, with whatever business logic they want. Testing of the integration is also happening at the same time. We are testing against live endpoints instead of taking everything to a separate test environment.

CEOCFO: *What is your revenue model?*

Mr. Szabo: We sell the product as perpetual licenses with annual maintenance stream, or as a service. We also offer white-labeled versions of Enterprise Enabler for our OEM partners. We do provide some services, mostly just training and bringing the teams up to speed on the various options for architectures. We believe that it is important to be available to mentor and make sure their solutions leverage our features for performance, security, automatic caching, and others.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to prospective customers? If someone is looking, how will they know to search for Stone Bond?*

Ms. Szabo: We are doing many different things. We have been doing a fair amount of online marketing with social media and so forth, and that is kind of a fun thing that we are finding is working very well for us. We are well covered by the analysts Gartner and Forrester, and we occasionally go to conferences and promote ourselves there. It is mostly our internal and reseller efforts of getting the word out to big corporations.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned as the product has been available? What has changed, if anything, over time in the concept and the implementation?*

Ms. Szabo: The most amazing thing is that we have learned that our architecture has proven to be hugely adaptable to all the new demands that have come about over the last few years. Our first production version was in 2004, and we have been able to keep up with every one of the new trends like Big Data, cloud and the web services as they evolve and move to REST, for example, without missing a beat. Another thing that has surprised us is that no competitors are approaching the problem this way. There are the point integrations that are for a particular purpose, and then there is the middleware. With respect to middleware, one typically thinks of IBM, Informatica, and Oracle. Those are the big companies that we go up against often, and interestingly, we win both technically and from the perspective of speed to delivery every time. What has happened is that several different, and mutually exclusive, models of integration have emerged over time. There is bulk load (ETL), and then a more transaction-oriented model (EAI), then more real-time data, web services and so forth, and now Data Virtualization (DV).

What has happened with the enterprise middleware companies is that the only choices they have is to go back and redesign deep into the product, or to buy another product company and kind of cobble them

together. The latter is by far the most common. Now they sport many, many different products, which cover the full suite of integration, but none can share any information back and forth across the products. You have to learn a new product for each of those different modes and write considerable custom code in order to use them together. With Enterprise Enabler, you are building the integration logic and then simply deploying it in any of those modes. The flexibility of this ultimately results in agility for the business.

CEOCFO: *It seems so simple that people might just overlook that!*

Ms. Szabo: I think that we really benefited from the fact that I had been thinking about a very complex set of problems that are inherent to the downstream petroleum industry. They have very complex applications that need data, so they can run complex simulations and calculations. They need data from the market, the refinery, prices and volumes, and all these come from totally different applications. This is a problem I had been struggling with for 10 years before we decided to build the product. I think it is a different perspective on what the problem is that allowed us to come up with it.

If you cannot find out information quickly and if it takes highly trained, very expensive teams of people months to make one change, you are not agile. Everything is about agility. The agile companies are the ones that are going to win. It is a competitive advantage, and that is what our customers seek. They can shed their huge number of expensive resources and use much more general knowledge programmers and even database analysts and build a very sophisticated infrastructure.

CEOCFO: *What might be different a year or two down the road for Stone Bond Technologies?*

Ms. Szabo: Stone Bond is growing quickly now, and there are going to be many changes and new uses of the technology. With the product itself, we have many exciting things that we are enhancing. For example, you may have heard of master data management (MDM). Because our product is a framework for capturing metadata ("data about data"), it is easy to define and leverage data in manageable and secure process, traversing the metadata stack that we have. We can make an interface with a video-game feel that shows all of the data throughout the company, the workflow that it goes through and how fast it is moving now. There is no way you could do that now in most companies because they do not have the data that just actually flows straight through where it needs to be. Absent our technology this is virtually impossible to build and yet we are seeing almost universal appeal for this application.

BIO: Ms. Szabo is co-founder of Stone Bond and the primary architect of Enterprise Enabler. Having founded three companies during her career, she managed to spend the majority of her career working with information technology, with experience ranging from technical programming, computer graphics, robotics, analysis, and design, through project management as well as the "softer" aspects of implementation work, including business process re-engineering and change management. As a result of several years focused study of integration requirements of information requirements of information systems for the energy industry, she became interested in making integration easily available to scientist, engineers, and data analysts without being dependent on a programmer. Her overall concept, architecture and philosophy have become Enterprise Enabler. Ms. Szabo holds a BS, summa cum laude, in Computer Science from the University of Houston.
