

## **Create a Workable Business Model**

The vision of our first company was to build programmer productivity tools that would facilitate building and maintaining large scale application systems. The only problem was it would take tens of millions of dollars and years to build the necessary suite of products and support materials.

Our solution was to find indirect incremental paths to solving the problems associated with building and maintaining large scale application systems that people would be willing to pay for. We looked for problems that we thought we could solve quickly within the budget authority of the person who had the problem. The strategy worked.

While our long term goal was to build commercial grade, off-the-shelf tools, we built a viable business around solving immediate problems. The solution of each problem contributed to the cadre of tools we originally set out to build.

The tools we built solved real problems for people who were real customers. The amount of money we charged was commensurate with the size of the project. We were able to make commitments and keep them. We built a solid company.

We were focused on goals that were achievable. At the same time we were looking for ways to expand the use of our tools, knowledge and experience by leveraging what we had built into a variety of different uses. It turned out that the tools, as they became operational, provided efficiencies for the development of a range of application areas opening new market opportunities for us.

We built a workable business model that positioned our company to drive revenue to our door. We developed mechanisms to gain access to expansive markets. We developed a methodology to manage the delivery process. We built extraordinary customer relationships, many that lasted more than a decade. We put a highly visible budgeting process and cost controls in place across the company.

The result was we built two companies: one built and sold programmer productivity tools – that company went public; the other company became a successful application development company and was acquired by an international consulting firm.

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