



The Napkin Guys: Startup Infrastructure & Implementation

Tim Hanson: Hey, while we're here, I have another topic.

Bryan Bechtoldt: Yeah, we keep staying longer.

Tim: You know, we just have a lot of clients in particular, I think here in Madison in general, we have a lot of clients that kind of start with that incubation period and then they go through the innovation period.

Bryan: Yeah.

Tim: And then at some point they transform and go through the evolution and develop a revenue model.

Bryan: And it becomes a business.

Tim: And it becomes a real business.

Bryan: Yeah yeah yeah, right.

Tim: You know? And so, you know, how do we build that foundation as they start to evolve into the real business?

Bryan: Boy, it's a great question and one that's unique by client, right?

Tim: Yeah.

Bryan: So you know we've had a lot of growth, economic growth over the past few years. We've had a lot of great businesses start up and we've been privileged to be a part of a lot of that. And what's really helped, I think, the business incubation process is there are technologies available now, software and the cloud, where people can kind of get their business started and get it moving. Then, at some point, they need to take that kind of software they're buying in little bits and chunks and it needs kind of come together in a system that their business can grow from.

Tim: Well and they have classic challenges though, right?

Bryan: Yeah.

Tim: They need many different systems, typically. Often ERP, CRM, perhaps some type of manufacturing or production environment system.

Bryan: The relationship management.



Tim: They need to control capital expenditures because they're in that period you have trying to position perhaps for investments, perhaps requisition.

Bryan: Trying to gain market share.

Tim: Trying to gain market share.

Bryan: Maybe going international. So, there's a lot of cash constraints on the business and so, you know, how do we kind of get together and plan that? And again, I kind of said at the start, it's really unique by scenario and by client. And so, you know, what we've had some success doing recently over the past couple of years is kind of going in and really engaging with the business leaders, and really, kind of outside the confines of whatever IT structure would exist at that point and saying, you know, really, where are you taking your business and, you know, what are you looking to do? And then trying to figure out how these systems come together and then how the information flows between them and making sure that we can connect them in a way that's not siloed. I mean, one of the advantages a new business has is it doesn't have legacy systems and legacy silos from years upon years of kind of cobbled development.

Tim: That's right.

Bryan: And instead we can take sort of a fresh modern approach of, you know, let's build an integrated system from the start and let's do that with an eye to how do we report the business. How do we create visibility in how the business is operating, and how sales is operating, and how production schedules are running, and how orders are processing, what customer service is doing. So we have a kind of a coordinated holistic view of the health of the business at any given time. And if we do that, if we design that from the beginning, we can create a very modern infrastructure for the business to run on that gives the executives a real advantage of visibility into what the business segments are doing in an orchestrated, and in sort of one pane of glass of health, and I think that's the payoff pitch. And so the technologies that sort of sit under the covers of that are things like an enterprise data warehouse, and it might be an ERP system, and it might be a collaboration tool, and it could be contact center software, and it could be you know, whatever.

Tim: So you describe what we call the pillar system.

Bryan: Correct.

Tim: But we need some layer, as an organization goes through this evolution, we need some layer kind of program management on top of it.



Bryan: Right.

Tim: But then, you know, how do we plan the fee structure for an organization as they start to invest in these systems?

Bryan: Yeah, and so, and that's really the key is how do we control this growth so it's just not run away creativity. So, you come in and we do that kind of needs analysis, understand where the business is going and what they want to get for output. And then we kind of carefully architect the systems together, and then there's the almighty and magical execution of how we put them in place. How do we make them interact and how do we get them effective in the business on a timeline, on a budget to create the impact that's desired by the people investing in those systems. And that's really, you use the word program manage, that's really what it is. Program management is, here's the problem - business problem, here's the technology enabling solution, and then here's the execution team that's going to deliver that for you. And that really, it's coordinated program management, is the synthesis of multiple projects kind of coming together at one point with interdependencies, and timelines, and milestones, to deliver a solution that the business can build on.

Tim: Well I think as we look at, certainly as we look at our client base and as I said, we look at the clients that are within the Madison geography, there tends to be a lot of organizations that are kind of going through this evolution. I think we have a particular strength and in particular, you've led a number of projects with a strong program management strategy.

Bryan: Yeah.

Tim: Just to take those organizations from, as I said, incubation through real business, right?

Bryan: Right. It's my passion, is to take technology at it's kind of core basis and to really see it become enabling in a business or in an organization. How it transforms the way people think in the way that they work and, you know, how we get it to market on time. How do we execute those cycles. I've been really privileged to work with a lot of great companies that way and I hope it's something we continue to do a lot.

Tim: Yeah.