

# THE WAY FORWARD

## How SAAS Companies Harness IT To Manage Their Own Growth



### A conversation with Sonny Sehgal, Chief Executive Transputec

Extract from a report commissioned by:



Powerful Accounting Software

# Introduction

Leading Edge – Bleeding Edge – Unicorn

– whatever the description of a fast-track growth company, its focus tends to be four-square on the envelope bursting, disruptive ‘product’.

But what are the particular management issues which have to be addressed with rapid expansion in order for a business to realise potential and meet expectations?

Is there a risk, for example, that for a technology company, its own IT infrastructure can become the equivalent of cobbler’s shoes?

Especially when, as one CEO put it, managing the growth trajectory is like constantly pressing on the fast-forward button on the television remote and trying to make sense of what you’re watching on the screen.

In a report commissioned by iplicit, the cloud accounting software company, to be prepared and published by DECISION magazine later this year, the chief executives and chief financial officers of SAAS companies will be revealing what they consider to be the key metrics and why, how best to address the challenges that such rapid growth can present, both in terms of operational execution and controlling costs, and whether IT can facilitate stability. What is a necessity to maintain momentum?

This is one of the interviews to be included.



# Where differentiation really comes from

On the one hand, Sonny Sehgal was looking forward to starting his three-year degree course in computer science. On the other, he saw an opportunity to start his own business.

Not such a dilemma as you might think. Sehgal decided to do both – at the same time.

“I was probably the least clever guy in my class, but I developed an application for a bank using my skillset and that of my fellow students,” he recalls.

When he graduated as a BSc from Imperial College his company had grown to seven staff. Today, Transputec, a £23million turnover IT services and solutions provider now has over one hundred and fifty.

There was one lesson he learnt from both the lecture room and his business. “Innovation has to be continuous. Challenging the norm, asking the question why are you doing it this way; that’s what gets people excited,” he says. “Differentiation comes from pushing the envelope to drive optimisation and value.”





*Sonny Sehgal*

“The biggest challenge for us in order to deliver that – it’s a problem for the whole tech sector – is bringing on board the quality of staff, both from the sales and tech perspective, who can keep on track with the speed of technological advances.”

But that’s an issue which can be balanced to a degree by the introduction of artificial intelligence which can release some tasks which take people an inordinate amount of time. Sehgal knows that because his company has already applied it.

He explains: “If you take the service desk of a typical managed service provider, the more customers it acquires, the more staff it needs to support them. We developed an AI solution to reduce the requirement for additional headcount and increase the efficiency of existing operations.





“This AI enabled software speeds up the process of dealing with ‘tickets’ because it ingests all the information about the company in question, such as processes, playbooks, documentation, and provides the service desk teams a full context of a problem and how to solve the issue in record time. For us that has represented a thirty-five to forty per cent time saving, in addition to making on-boarding easier.”

“When a business is in its infancy,” observes Sehgal, “It can make instant decisions. As it grows, decision-making becomes more complex and takes longer. But then it should return to being quicker because the business will be maturing and has put processes in place, with AI being used to help make some of those processes faster and more efficient.”

And Sehgal provides another specific example of what can be achieved with automation.



“Before,” he explains, “on boarding a new client could take a week because it was in effect a manual task because someone had to assemble all the paperwork such as a credit check. Now all the due diligence can take just a couple of hours.

“With front end customer acquisition, AI is also being used in force to shorten the time to go to market with a proposition. A blog for example could have taken a week to be created and published. With the help of AI we can have it done in a matter of a couple of hours. Of course it needs human intervention to read and approve what it produces but the genesis and preparation is AI enabled.”

“As a company grows its team, so the management challenge increases,” says Sehgal. “Growth needs to be accompanied by providing its people with opportunities for self improvement. It’s all about a culture of continually learning new things.

“Our culture and values are based on our response needing to be ‘always a yes’. It’s really important. I tell everyone if they touch a customer positively, you influence them.

“And we have to remember people are more impatient now. They want an answer immediately or at least expect you to initiate a dialogue so they know when they might get it.

“You have to be transparent with customers because they will see through anything else. If you make a mistake, tell them and explain what you are doing to fix it.





“We monitor our key financial key metrics every day, and there is a formal review by the board each month. We also have KPIs which identify whether people need help, guidance, and to gauge customer reaction to us in the form of real-time metrics including net promoter scores.

“We regularly invite customers to a kind of workshop session with our management team or those who engage with directly with them to share the good, the bad, and the ugly, perhaps over lunch, a Teams call, or a visit to their offices.”

There’s a particular benefit from that information exchange. “A customer focused provider will bring forward technology which they know will fit a specific customer’s need,” asserts Sehgal.



“You can’t push technology towards them unless you know it will add value – otherwise the risk is that the relationship will be damaged.

“When you spend the energy and time to constantly see where you can be innovative, it enables you to knock on the customer’s door and say this could be a ‘wow’ for your business because look at what it’s done for ours.”

In addition to his role at Transputec, Sehgal is the commercial officer of a health tech business, Vastmindz AI, owned by family members which is developing technology that will enable someone to use their mobile phone to check blood pressure, heart rate, and other vital data extracted from a selfie video.

And the AI enabled technology to on-board Transputec clients and satisfy tickets more quickly and efficiently has been spun off into a separate business (Neo Agent.io) as well.

[www.transputec.com](http://www.transputec.com)





## About iplicit

Providing a cloud-based finance and management software solution that allows fast-track growth technology companies to focus on what really matters. Tailored for those frustrated by on-premise legacy software, iplicit provides greater flexibility and enhanced levels of reporting, integrating with other cloud applications for a seamless migration path from a user's existing system, enabling organisations to 'step up' to next generation finance software without losing the functionality they currently enjoy. iplicit received the Accounting Excellence award for mid-market and enterprise software of the year in 2020, and the top product for enterprise accounting/ERP in the Accounting Web software awards, 2021.

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*The interview with Sonny Sehgal was undertaken with Tim Coles, specialist at iplicit in working with technology companies.*



## **About DECISION magazine**

First published in 1988, DECISION magazine reflects the business lifestyle, the trials and tribulations, the hopes and aspirations of directors and managing partners responsible for businesses with a turnover of £5million and above.

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