

Presentations to Mobile Devices in the Education and Enterprise Markets: Wireless and Secure



Steven Hix
Founder

"We provide the solution to give a presentation at any given time, without any connections, taking advantage of the people in the room and their own personal smart devices."- Steven Hix

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CEOCFO: *Mr. Hix, you have history in the presentation market along with helping other software products get going, can you explain?*

Mr. Hix: There is a company that most people are familiar with called InFocus, which is a large projector company, which I founded in 1987. We were blessed to have started the United States and the world actually into a new era of presentations, using PowerPoint and Excel on a wall and allowing real-time corrections, moving away from that dirty old grease pencil. It really turned us all on to how we can make presentations for audiences in training, boardrooms and frankly all venues. It was a beautiful thing; it looked great and revolutionized the marketplace. As I worked through the growth of InFocus, we were able to take the company public. I left InFocus in 1994 and went on to start a number of other companies, with the current one being Circle Technology.

CEOCFO: *What is the concept at Circle Technology?*

Mr. Hix: Since I had launched InFocus so many years ago, I had been working on a vision of how to solve a problem; "How do we help the sales person walking into an office where there is no presentation equipment and has no idea of that situation until he/she gets into the room." Therefore, I worked on this project, wanting to make sure that it

was just like InFocus, simple and easy. We worked hard for a couple of years coming up with patented software for laptops. The software converts the laptop into a host and allows for smart devices or other laptops to connect to it, sharing the screen of the host to multiple viewers, without the Internet or networks connections, making it a stand along private network for In the Room presentations. I wanted to take that projection screen from the wall and put it on everyone's device, forcing everyone to look eye to eye, rather than stare at the wall. I wanted to help create a relationship during the presentation, not just give a tool to share your screen. The presentation market has become stale and dry, so why not take advantage of the mobile devices that everyone has today, by sharing the screen to those and controlling what they see on their screen, while holding the presentation in their own hands. More importantly, we do not change the laptop in anyway, so all your programs are available to you, you still have access to the web if you need it and you do not have to depend on any one else but yourself, your imagination is your limitation. On the laptop, you have CircleHost, which runs on any Windows 7/8/10 Operating System and the viewer is an app available on iTunes, Google Play or Windows. The steps are easy, you click and run CircleHost on your laptop, the people in the room have the app on their phone or on their tablet, so they just open and connect to the host, immediately viewing the screen of the host on their devices, without cables, networks or the web. To make it even better, it is secure with WPA2 Encryption and is password protected.

CEOCFO: *Will people, in general, download the app when someone comes in with a presentation? Have you found any reluctance?*

Mr. Hix: People today download apps all the time, so there has never been an issue. In some cases they have the app already, but if not, their tablet has Wifi in the building and they download it then and there. On their phone they have has the ability to access the app store at any time through their cell network, plus the download is less than 5 seconds in most cases and the file is very small, so we do not take up any space on their devices. .

CEOCFO: *How do people find Circle Technology? What would they search for? Do people know they can do something better with their PowerPoint?*

Mr. Hix: People can search the web for presentation solutions and come across Circle as a fix, but the problem arises when you try to define what Circle is. Circle falls into a mobile presentation market, so that means we are a "Mobile" product, define Mobile? The mobile market has exploded in the last 5-10 years and it seems that everything from phones to video conferencing is considered mobile today. Now that we have created a product to help with "Mobile" presentations, we have to dig down and launch a marketing plan that focuses on explaining our product within the mobile sector and trying to separate ourselves from the pack. We are in the middle of designing and implementing the go to market plan and in the next few weeks will be putting it into action. To respond to your question about a better PowerPoint, I think that we provide the ability to look eye to eye with you customer, not give you the better software to use PowerPoint. The original design of PowerPoint was to offer a visual aid to pitch something, but at Circle, we are providing the delivery solution as software that gets the PowerPoint in front of the customer, from there it is up to sales person to make the sale or the presenter to pitch or train.

CEOCFO: *There are so many people using PowerPoint, who is your target market? Are there particular industries or segments?*

Mr. Hix: I started just looking at what problem it fixes for me. I go out and make presentations from one to one, or one to three people all of the time. In many places, they will not let you come in and get on their internet, which is where I have the majority of my files and presentations that I share with customers. They want you to make presentations on their own equipment in their own room and the problem with that situation is many places do not have the capabilities to connect your device or the proper IT support in the first place. The short answer to whom I would target is anyone that has to give a presentation. That said, as a small company you have to start with a focused segment of the market and then expand as you grow the company. We started targeting the Enterprise Sector, with a focus on three segments, Financial, Insurance and Direct Sales. Since the launch of the product, we have expanded not only the target markets, but also the product itself, with focus into the government and education sectors, adding more features and the amount of connections. Today, we have three products that can share the laptop screen, depending on the situation, whether for small meetings or large meetings or up to 40 screens at once.

CEOCFO: *How do you decide what industry to reach first? How do you reach everyone but not dilute what you are doing? What is your strategy?*

Mr. Hix: When I decided to launch this product, I looked at the product itself on terms of what was required to use it, along with why we built it. I decided that since it was a Windows software solution to host, I needed to focus on the market that was majority Windows. The sector for me was Enterprise, due to the sheer numbers of users of Windows devices. In fact, I believe when we first launch Circle that over 75% of all Enterprises used Windows as their OS. From that point, I looked at who would benefit from the solution and decided that security and privacy was key in the Insurance and Financial Industries. Since our first product was screen sharing off the network to a small group in a private and intimate setting, the choice was to move forward on the targeted groups, I just mentioned. Currently we focus our direct sales efforts in the enterprise sector, but have expanded to working with distribution partners, to reach other markets like education and government. We use distribution to lower overhead, while gaining a large amount of people on the street pitching Circle, utilizing of our distribution channels sales teams and partnerships.

CEOCFO: *Where was the biggest challenge in the technology?*

Mr. Hix: Software is the challenge! All the computers are a little different, making it difficult to design a simple solution, because we rely on a number of components directly within the laptops. Circle is doing something that no one else in the market is doing or can do based off our patented technology, but that also makes things difficult because we are pioneering the move.

CEOCFO: *Will you be funding internally? Are you looking for partners or distributors?*

Mr. Hix: We have raised some Seed Money to build the product and do our initial introduction to the market, along with the funding I have done myself. We are now in the process of seeking Venture Money, which will help us reach our goals of getting the product to market, while also expanding our team, both in the sales and development. As for growing

our partners or distribution channel, that is always a work in progress, because you can't skip a beat when you are creating a new product and potential new market. We have decided to set up distribution both domestic and internationally, gaining more market awareness by using their resources to reach their customers and potential end users. We have also decided that OEM Partnerships would be a good entry point for us, in which our first partner has been Elmo USA, a document camera company that focuses on sales to education, again, growing our reach and market awareness by utilizing their sales channel they already have in place. When asking the question, do we want more, that answer would be YES, but balancing the growth and actual ability you have within Circle to support those channels and customers is key, you cannot afford to over extend.

CEOCFO: *Why is the “get it right from day one,” a better approach?*

Mr. Hix: Have you ever tried something and it didn't work? If your answer is yes, then you more than likely never went back to that product. With software today, people assume it just works and that there is no reason it can't do 500 things along with working. With that said, we are developing software to work with you on giving presentation, so if the software doesn't work for you in the time of need, then not only does it not work, but it also may of cost you the customer, and then you really have had a bad experience at that point. We cannot use potential customers or early adaptors as our product test teams, we must have a solid product to offer the end user, because the expectations are so high today, you may only get one shot and you have to take advantage of it. The product has to work on day one and solve a problem that is happening in the current presentation market, whether on a sales call or in the classroom. If anything, the best way to make sure that you get things right with your customer is to under promise and over deliver, so they expect very little, yet get so much more as a result.

CEOCFO: *What is a one or two word description that would get people where they can find you online?*

Mr. Hix: I think the first word will always be a variable and the second would always be Presentation (_____ **presentation**). You can put anything in front of presentation and our product could fit it almost any of those. Take for example these words; Mobile, Dynamic, Intimate, Direct, Personal or Secure, I can keep on going, but the point is that any of those words followed by Presentation is Circle Technology. We provide the solution to give a presentation at any given time, without any connections, taking advantage of the people in the room and their own personal smart devices. We have begun building a brand around Circle Technology and have also began focusing on key search engine optimization goals to help drive awareness over the web. With the growth of the product, sales and the brand itself, I am expecting good things.

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