



Executive Interview

Robin Curle, CEO, Journée Software

Emily Sopensky, The Iris Company

Austin is a unique community that blends the best of what's new and old into a concoction of fresh directions and relationships. This is especially true in the software industry. Doesn't hurt that the Austin Software Council is among those blended specials.

For example **Journée Software** was co-founded by Rob Beauchamp, who also initiated and chairs the Council's CTO Peer Group. On Journée's board of directors is one of the key strategists for the Council's leading initiatives with the University of Texas, Ron Harris, who is also CEO of **Pervasive Software**. Also on the board is new member Martin Neath, the former executive VP of Tivoli and now COO for **Works.com**. A frequent sponsor of Council events is Dennis Murphree, managing partner of Murphree Ventures, who is also on the board of Journée.

Finally heading up the management team at Journée is CEO Robin Curle. While still executive vice president of **Evolutionary Technologies International (ETI)**, a founding member of the Council, Robin joined Journée's board. Four months later in July 1999 she left the company she helped Kay Hammer build to become CEO of Journée, a software company that offers self-service and customer care products in the Internet commerce software (ICS) market, estimated to be valued at \$6.8 billion by 2002. And Robin, not surprisingly, is also on the board of directors for the Austin Software Council.

Q: Before becoming CEO, when you were working with ETI and in other jobs, did you ever want to be a CEO?

A: I've always been goal-oriented. Very early I said to myself, "If I could only get into sales . . ." then, "If I could only get into management . . ." and so on. Reaching those goals was not satisfying in itself, but the next goal was always there. While working to make ETI a success, I really didn't focus on whether or not I wanted to be a CEO. But towards the end I started to think about it because I was getting a lot of calls. Then I joined Journée's board. I got really excited about

Journée, the people, and the opportunity here. And the market space is huge. I worked very hard to transition ETI. For a while I was doing two jobs. But the transition went well. Kay and I grew the company—we were joined at the hip—and we remain good friends. And I still sit on ETI's board.

Q: Technically did you have to learn a lot in your transition?

A: What Journée does is self-service and customer care over the web. It's kind of the top part, where ETI's Extract is the back or data migration part. I had to learn the web and Internet structure, but on top of 27 years of technology experience, it isn't hard. Rob Beauchamp and Brian Baker are the visionaries. They helped me get up to speed. We, as a team, really worked on the focus. The other thing I did to make my life easier was to hire Carolyn Carlson who is the COO. She came from Dell and then Centaur Technologies.

Q: What tasks did the board initially charge you with?

A: Define the focus for the company; get the bridge financing; begin the process of venture capital funding; get prospects in the pipeline, getting the foothold for going to market, hiring the VP of sales, and pulling a management team together.

We got private money from a number of really interesting people: former Dell executive and Capital Metro chairman Lee Walker, Intelliquest and Zilliant founder Peter Zandan, Martin Neath, and Craig Malloy who founded Polycorn, and a current Dell executive. The product is done. The market is defined, and now we're going after \$10–15 million and should have that wrapped up pretty quickly.

Prospects include Great American and Nationwide and several other large financial services organizations. We've also started to partner with companies like Cap Gemini and a couple of other integrators.

I hired Kevin Lally as VP of sales, who is moving here from Phoenix. He's got 18 years of executive sales. The development team that's

in place is world-class. Now it's just a matter of building the sales and marketing organization.

Q: Sounds like it's downhill from here!

A: When the funding is done, we can get down to real work. But getting funding takes 70% of your time. This company has attempted funding before without good positioning. But we have some good competitors for the round. It isn't just the money. It's getting the people that collaborate and who are not confrontational. There really haven't been any surprises. You get to know personalities. Those who are with the company today are the right people personality-wise and they have the right skill sets to take this company to the next level.

Q: What else is on your agenda right now?

A: It's an execution issue now. I need a couple of more hires—a VP of strategic alliances and business development and a VP of marketing. Within a few years we do plan to go IPO. We're pleased that *digitalsouth* named us one of the top 50 companies to watch.

Q: How long have you been with the Austin Software Council?

A: ETI was a founding member. I've been on the board for about a year and a half. When someone calls me who is moving to town, I tell them the first thing they've got to do is join the Austin Software Council. It gets them involved; gets them to know who is doing what in the industry. You can go to peer group meetings, to the monthly meetings, the seminars. You can get better exposure to what's going on through the Austin Software Council than any single entity in Austin. When

Steve Vandegrift said he was going to take the Council to an independent status, he did. He said he was going to, and while he was working 18-hour days at Activerse, he

. . . what the Council gives us is connections. . . .



International Committee The Council is Expanding Its Global Reach

Deirdre Mendez, International Project Coordinator

Great news on Austin Software Council's international front—the website now has an international page. Check out the Going Global section designed and managed by Melissa Guthrie (www.austinsoftwarecouncil.org/resources/international). This site is constantly being updated with new information, news, and notices. Notes from the International Peer Group meetings are posted there along with presentation slides. The international page will also keep you apprised of upcoming events—both the Software Council's and others'—and information about international technology markets. Also posted are international resume summaries for companies looking to hire people with international talent. If you'd like to post an international article, event, resume, or notice, contact me at dlb-fbmc@worldnet.att.net.

In early November I traveled to Japan with Mayor Watson and Greater Austin Chamber representatives to meet with government and industry officials. A really exciting result of this trip is the relationship we established with the Japan Information Services Industry Association. JISA is a government organization roughly equivalent to the ITAA in the US. JISA members represent 60% of the IT market in Japan—a large segment of the total world market. JISA is eager to introduce promising new technology from the US to their members interested in partnering with entrepreneurial US companies. JISA has agreed to promote companies identified by the Council to their members. If you're interested in testing the Japanese market, check out www.austinsoftwarecouncil.org/resources/international/JISA, or call me at (512) 338-1177.

Our first International Trade Fair February 16 introduced local tech companies to economic development organizations from around the world. These organizations provided information about the software market in their region.

The Council's March 1 Workforce Outsourcing Seminar will provide an in-depth discussion of strengthening competitive advantage through outsourcing programming

skills, a follow-up to the January monthly meeting. Outsourced workforce customers and industry representatives recommend the best use and management of overseas talent.

The International Program Committee will be meeting soon to schedule some new events for 2000. If you're interested in helping to plan any international programs, contact me at dlb-fbmc@worldnet.att.net.

Deirdre Mendez is the Austin Software Council's International Program coordinator. She can be reached at 338-1177 or dlb-fbmc@worldnet.att.net.

Message from the Chair

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- ▶ **High school relations**—We kicked off a program to reach out, mentor, and expose high school students in Austin to the technology profession.
- ▶ **Prevail**—This association management software package improved our back office operations.

As we move into 2000, I'd like to reiterate our mission: *Through membership collaboration and enhancing competitiveness, to forge a world center of software in central Texas.* So please, read on to learn more about our 2000 activities and opportunities to get engaged and make a difference. I look forward to seeing you at Council functions and having each of you get more involved over the coming year.

Betty Otter-Nickerson is the Council Chair. She's BMC Software VP of Operations, Product Management, Development, and Austin Site Manager.

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pulled it off. He put the board together and he decided he wanted a high profile for the organization and he wanted it to raise its own money. Suddenly membership has gone up. People are participating. We're adding a couple of new board members.

Q: How does the Council help Journ e?

A: Rob Beauchamp, our CTO, founded and manages the CTO Peer Group. Obviously that's our contribution. But what the Council gives us is connections including companies that we can learn from and partner with. Our employees can learn from the monthly meetings, seminars, and peer group meetings. It helps grow people.

While the Council is kind of in transition itself as it attracts larger companies, the focus is still the entrepreneurial company. In fact the value is greater for the entrepreneurial member if the larger organizations are involved. And it gives the Council additional credibility as the entity in town for software. Plus the CEO Peer Group, of which I'm a member, merged with the Chamber's Software Cluster Group.

We had the first meeting in January. Since we tended to be two different groups focusing on the same issues and trying to solve the same problems, we're now pulling our resources together instead of duplicating efforts. Like any business, collaboration with others makes you stronger.

The other thing I want to say about the Council is that I find it amazing the amount of energy, time, commitment, and devotion that volunteers put into this organization. How can it not become even more important an entity with that kind of commitment? It creates its own momentum and the cause is a really good one. It always surprises me how very busy people commit a lot of their time. It's a very happy family.