



BBBT Podcast Transcript



About the BBT

The Boulder Business Intelligence Brain Trust, or BBT, was founded in 2006 by Claudia Imhoff. Its mission is to leverage business intelligence for industry vendors, for its members, who are independent analysts and experts, and for its subscribers, who are practitioners. To accomplish this mission, the BBT provides a variety of services, centered around vendor presentations.

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Claudia Imhoff: Hello, and welcome to this edition of the Boulder BI Brain Trust, or the BBBT. We're a gathering of international consultants, analysts, and experts in Business Intelligence, who meet with interesting and innovative BI companies here in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. We not only get briefed on the latest news and releases, but we share our ideas with the vendor on where the BI industry is going and help them with their technological directions and marketing messages. I'm Claudia Imhoff, and the BBBT Podcasts are produced by my company, Intelligent Solutions.

I'm pleased to introduce my guests today. They are Mike Flannagan and Bob Eve. Mike is a Senior Director and General Manager. Bob Eve is the Director of Product Marketing for Virtualization for Cisco Systems. The newly acquired Composite Software is now part of Cisco Systems. Welcome to you both.

Mike Flannagan: Thanks very much Claudia. Glad to be here.

Bob Eve: Yes, glad to be here.

CI: Let's talk about that -- that first part there. Cisco did just buy Composite. Mike, let me ask you. What was the reason behind the purchase?

MF: Cisco has an acquisition strategy as part of a broader strategy around how we innovate. It's a three pronged approach around internal innovation and development, acquisition activity, and partnerships. When we looked at Composite, we saw a few things that made them a company that would be a great fit with Cisco. It really started with things that we were hearing from our customers around problems that they were trying to solve.

As we looked to our internal innovation capability, partnerships, or acquisitions, it seemed to make sense for us to acquire Composite. In Composite, we found a great culture fit with Cisco, which is an extremely important part of successful acquisitions or partnerships.

We have found a lot of synergy between the way that Cisco looks at customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, adding value to customers with the way that Composite looked at the same things. A spirit of engineering



innovation exists in both companies that made the combination sensible for both.

CI: That's nice. That's nice to hear. Bob, let me bring you into the conversation because one of the first questions anyone's going to ask is, "OK, what's going to happen to the Composite software products?" Are you going to continue to be a data virtualization part of Cisco Systems, or are you going to be morphed into something that's a bigger product?

BE: We do have a very successful data virtualization business. We fully intend to continue that business, grow it, support those customers, add customers, add capability, and continue to build that business. There are also some very interesting opportunities to combine the technology that Composite has provided in the past with the network capabilities and the other powerful technologies that Cisco brings to bear in the market.

I think the combination... There are some opportunities over there, as well. I think we'll have a "both" strategy going forward -- drive the data virtualization business and leverage the technology to create some new opportunities, as well.

CI: Let me go back to you, Mike, because I was actually surprised at how much Cisco has, and what it's done in the past. It's a remarkable company. You've gotten into areas that were way off from the network, basically. Why don't you tell me a little bit about, at least, if nothing, the vision and the strategy of Cisco.

MF: One of the foundational concepts at Cisco, and I suspect at most companies, is the value that we create for our customers and the value that we bring to our customers. As with any organization, if we're not constantly innovating to add more value for customers, they'll look elsewhere for that innovation. One of the areas at Cisco that have really excelled in, over our history, is seeing around the corner a bit at market transitions. Catching market transitions early and helping our customers navigate those market transitions. Ultimately, emerge from those market transitions stronger and with more opportunity than when the market transition started.



This is an extremely exciting time in the market, of course. There's lots of activity around cloud. There's lots of activity around Big Data and analytics. There's lots of activity around traditional outsourcing, giving way to more multi-sourcing relationships.

Lots of things changing in the market. Lots of transitions that our customers are having to go through. Cisco helping navigate some of those market transitions, is what will allow us to continue to add value to our relationships with those customers and make us relevant for their business.

We want to make sure that as customers move data to the cloud and as customers increasingly adopt Big Data for the purpose of analytics, that we are there to help them, enable them to make those transitions in a smooth way so that they are able to make the best use of all of their enterprise data.

We think that the acquisition of Composite by Cisco puts us in a very strong position to help customers solve many of the problems that are going to be created by moving lots of their work loads and applications to the cloud. Also, by adopting Big Data and increasingly relying on analytics that uses that Big Data and other enterprise data to drive better decisions.

CI: Yeah, you mentioned earlier the Intelligent Network. We'll get back to that in a just moment. I also wanted to touch on something else that you talked about that's becoming almost a buzz phrase, but it's an interesting idea. That's the Internet of things. You broadened it to say, "The Internet of everything." Why don't you explain a little bit about what you're talking about there? What is the Internet of things?

MF: First of all, I'll draw the distinction between the two. The Internet of things is, in Cisco's definition, specific to those non-human things that you connect to a network -- manufacturing equipment, tractors, trucks, sensors that would exist in any number of industrial...

CI: All of the machines generated, sensor data, and so forth, that we...



MF: Exactly right. The Internet of everything is a super set that includes all the things that you traditionally think of as being connected like your laptop and your smart-phone, plus all those things that are part of the Internet of things. If you look at the number of devices that are connected to the Internet today, or the number of things in the world that are connected to the network today, it's a fraction of a percent of all the things that exist in the world.

Think about the amount of data that we, as people, generate through email, Facebook, Twitter, and what have you. Consider now, that that's a fraction of one percent of all the things that can be connected, the opportunity for very large volumes of data, of course, is apparent.

Also, think about the intelligence that you can gain if everything that you own was connected to the network and could send you information.

CI: We hear about it all the time. Your car is contacting you to say that it's in need of service. Your house is telling you that something's gone wrong with the electrical system or whatever it is. You're right. The Internet of things is just a remarkable deluge of information. It all has to run on a network.

MF: When you consider some of the applications that you just mentioned. The connected house and a connected car, there are obviously practical applications to those. It's not a matter of life and death. Some of the things that are part of the Internet of things, that I think are even more compelling, are around health care. As people get older, they forget to take their pills. Imagine if you could know from a sensor that was part of a pill whether or not grandma had taken her pill this morning. That's a matter of life and death.

The network is becoming increasingly part of the fabric of health care, increasingly part of the fabric of everyday life.

CI: Of everyday life. Yeah another good example premature babies that have sensors all over them, that are detecting changes, minute changes in sub-second time frame,s so that a doctor can know faster than he could ever know in the past that something's gone wrong -- saving the life.



MF: Absolutely. I think the other aspect of what you just mentioned that it's not just about the volume and the velocity of the data. It's about being able to make use of that data right now.

CI: Absolutely.

MF: That real time access to the information is so much more important because information from a baby's heart monitor doesn't matter tomorrow. It matters right now.

CI: Exactly. Such an interesting time, such an innovative time. I am so excited about what you folks are doing. I want to hear about the future a little bit, too, because we got into a very interesting discussion, a little more detail, about how Composite will work with Cisco, in the future. How do you see Composite helping Cisco, in the future?

MF: First of all, I think there have been some concerns raised very shortly after we announced the acquisition by Cisco that Composite's capabilities would somehow disappear inside of a larger company. Before we start talking about future possibilities and potential, I just want to lay to rest the fears that we'll somehow absorb and obscure what Composite does today.

Composite's capabilities will continue to go to market, much as they do today, serving the same customer base and expanding on that customer base, serving the same sort of business challenges and helping solve those.

With that said, bringing together the expertise in networking that Cisco has and the expertise that Composite brings, there are a lot of opportunities to expand upon Composite's current capabilities using intelligence from the network to further optimize the way that Composite software performs.

Today, and Bob can certainly speak more to this than I, the network is more of a black box.

CI: It is, to most of us, yeah.

MF: It doesn't have to be that way. We think that there are incredible things that can be done to further optimize the way that Composite software



works, if that's not the case. Imagine, if you will, that instead of only being able to optimize queries based on knowledge of things that sit above the network. Composite software could understand bandwidth and quality of service characteristics and priority of certain types of applications on the network to really know how data would be moved across a network at what speed, with which priority, and use that information along with the rest of their query optimization algorithms to determine even better optimized queries.

Imagine, then even further, a future where if Composite software doesn't like the answer that it gets when it asks those questions of the network, it can interact with the network to request different characteristics -- more bandwidth, higher priority for a period of time.

The possibilities of combining network intelligence and network programmability with Composite software, really opens some very interesting doors.

CI: Yeah, it really does. I think that's the part that I found fascinating. Bob, why don't you give us a quick example of exactly what you're talking about Mike?

BE: Let's consider the cloud. As more and more data moves to the cloud that bandwidth, that pipe to the cloud, is over the wide area network or the Internet. That's going to have totally different performance characteristics than a query to the big Netezza box downstairs. Whereas today, we would understand the capabilities of the Netezza box and what its query optimizations could do. Let's say, for example, Azure in the cloud, is the other source of data, where we would understand that side of it.

We might look at that query in a way that says, "Let's just look at not just the data sets, but the network characteristics and the strength of the pipe." Bring that together into a new way of optimizing that particular query and maybe a thousand rows on one side and a million rows on the other side. If we're going to pull that million rows through, we might want more bandwidth.

It's really bringing those factors together. Adding the network into our optimization algorithms. Actually, as Mike said, if we don't like the answer,



grab that network and change those characteristics temporarily, in order to meet the quality of service.

CI: Yeah, kind of the dynamic changes that are necessary, depending on the work load.

BE: It's all driven by the fact that the data is getting more and more distributed. We always talk about it proliferating in the volumes and the velocity. It's more proliferated than ever -- Cloud, analytic appliances, mobile users, et cetera. This is really driving that requirement.

CI: It's, hopefully, a wonderful future for both companies. I'm very excited for the two companies and especially, the merger. Unfortunately, we're out of time, though. That's it for this edition of the BBBT podcast.

Again, I'm Claudia Imhoff. It's been a great pleasure to speak with Mike Flannagan and of course, Bob Eve, my good friend, of Cisco Systems today. Thank you both for speaking with me.

MF: Thank you.

BE: Thank you.

CI: I hope you enjoyed today's podcast. You'll find more podcasts from other vendors at our web site, www.boulderbibraintrust.org. If you want to learn more about today's session, please search for our hash tag on Twitter. That's #BBBT. And please join me again for another interview. Good bye, and good business!