



BBBT Podcast Transcript



About the BBBT

The Boulder Business Intelligence Brain Trust, or BBBT, 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 BBBT provides a variety of services, centered around vendor presentations.

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Guest(s): Lara Shackelford, VP, Marketing

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Claudia Imhoff: Welcome to this special edition of the Boulder BI Brain Trust podcast. I'm Claudia Imhoff, and I'm here in Grants Pass, Oregon, at the Humphrey Strategic Communications annual Pacific Northwest BI Summit. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to interview each of the vendors attending this event.

CI: With me today is Lara Shackelford. She is the Vice President of Marketing for DataStax. Welcome, Lara.

Lara Shackelford: Thank you, Claudia. It's great to be here.

CI: One of the topics that came up this morning was an interesting one. We had a whole discussion around real-time and right-time. You had some interesting comments about that. Why don't you tell me what you mean by that?

LS: I liked the concept of right-time. We've often heard of real-time when we talk about NoSQL technologies. The fact is that, really, right-time is the right way to say it. What that means to me is that, if you've got a business or an enterprise trying to get to their customer, trying to offer them a great experience, they now have the ability to serve them what they want, when they want it. It will feel like real-time to the customer.

CI: Which is really nice, because it's within seconds. That's what we're talking about. It may not be instantaneous, but it certainly is within a second or two.

LS: It absolutely is. It can be within a three second lag time. It's really about an organization being willing to understand that they're willing to leave a little data on the table to provide their customer a better customer experience.

CI: Really important, too. Now, the other topic that we touched on a little bit was the idea of consolidation in the NoSQL world. That seems to be the prediction du jour. Everybody's talking about, well, there are a lot of these companies, maybe, that are going to get bought up or whatever. What are your thoughts there?



LS: I was interested that that comment was repeated a few times around the table today. What we see is that there's so much noise in this big data ecosystem, and then there are lots of people who come up in different flavors of being NoSQL providers, and so it's confusing for the consumer, who's trying to figure out the path forward and how they add the most value to their customers. For us, at DataStax, for me personally, it all comes down to value and who's really creating value for their customers. You really have to look at, with these NoSQL providers, who's providing? Who's got a list of 10 real use cases and real customers that they can name, and then 20, and onwards from there? I think the ones that have real customers that they can bring to the table, they've proven that they can add value. I think that's where you're going to see the market focus.

CI: That is important, because it indicates stability a little bit. It indicates that they've got some financial backing, perhaps, and so forth, right?

LS: Exactly. It indicates that customers recognize that this isn't just a trendy technology or something. They recognize that it's something that they can apply to their business in a real way to address whatever their business case is.

CI: Well, since you mentioned customers, let's dive right in.

LS: Sure.

CI: Why don't you give me a few examples of some of your customers?

LS: Sure. At DataStax, we started as a company around three years ago. In 2011, we had around 30 customers, and today we have more than 300 customers.

CI: Wow.

LS: We're proud of our customers and what we've been able to do for them, and they are proud, too. They're a part of the open-source community, and they really talk about the value that they've realized. One customer like that is Netflix, who has been using us from the start. They went into this bold new world of NoSQL in a very smart way and early on. Netflix runs 95 percent of their technology infrastructure on DataStax Enterprise. What



they enable is they constantly need to track usage of their customers so that they can serve up the best offer to them. If they find that someone has a particular habit of watching a certain type of movie on a Saturday, they want to be able to serve up that type of movie to them in real time on a Saturday based on understanding their usage patterns.

They have to be always available for their customer. You can imagine, if you were a Netflix customer, you're watching, and you try to pause your movie, and the pause goes away and you have to start the movie over again. That's a terrible experience.

CI: That is awful.

LS: Netflix helps their customers watch movies, pause them, rewind them, and just have a great experience that's online all the time.

CI: That's wonderful. All right. Who else have you got?

LS: Sure. Another example is Ooyala, who's a video streaming and analytics company. They have major customers who run their video business through Ooyala, one of those being ESPN. Ooyala has implemented DataStax Enterprise, again, from the early days, and uses it to understand usage patterns among their customers. They also use it to make sure that they're providing their customers that real-time experience. Those were two media examples, but we're seeing that in banking and financial services, similar use cases, where it's about being right-time, let's call it, with your customers.

Another area where we're seeing a lot of pull in the marketplace is retail customers. One of the biggest retailers in the world came to us a few years ago, when they had an issue on Black Friday. They found that they were losing inventory out of their shopping cart. When you're one of the biggest retailers in the world and that happens on Black Friday, you make the front page of the "Wall Street Journal." That's not a position they want to find themselves in, so they came to us to work with us so that they could provide their customers with a better experience.

CI: Wow. It seems like retail, finance, even health care...



LS: Yes, health care is big.

CI: Yeah. They all want some kind of real-time, right-time, whatever it is. They want to be able to respond so much faster than they could in the past, right?

LS: Exactly.

CI: The last thing I wanted to ask you about is that DataStax has been in the news lately. You've had some rather remarkable news.

LS: Yes, it's been a whirlwind. In March, we announced that we launched our first subsidiary outside of the US. We founded a wholly owned subsidiary in EMEA. That's our EMEA office based in London. We've seen a lot of pull in the marketplace because of our open source Cassandra community and so we've already got momentum and traction there. We then announced in May that we've replaced more than 30 Oracle relational systems. We've got some customers who spoke about that and are very excited about that momentum.

That culminated in an announcement on July 23rd that we had the largest funding round we had taken to date. We received \$45 million in funding from Scale Venture Partners with some new participation from DFJ Growth and Next World Capital.

With that, it just really validates that we're here to stay. We've got a great market opportunity and we get to serve other customers like the ones I mentioned to you earlier.

CI: Somebody's got a lot of confidence in the company then, right?

LS: Absolutely.

CI: Well, thanks so much, Lara, for just speaking with me today. Again, it's Lara Shackelford. She is the vice president of marketing for DataStax, so thanks.

LS: Thank you.



CI: Thank you for listening to this special edition of the BBBT podcast, and thanks to Scott Humphrey for giving me this opportunity and for hosting the Pacific Northwest BI Summit.