

Engineered for Speed

An Interview with Pam Murphy,
Chief Operating Officer, Infor

EDITORS' NOTE Pam Murphy has held her current post since October 2011. Prior to assuming that role, she served as Senior Vice President of Corporate Operations. She has been with Infor since December 2010. Prior to Infor, she spent 11 years at Oracle Corporation, where she was responsible for a wide range of operational and financial functions. Prior to Oracle, Murphy was with Arthur Andersen. She earned her business and accounting degree from the University of Cork, Ireland and is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.



Pam Murphy

COMPANY BRIEF As the world's third-largest supplier of enterprise applications and services, Infor (www.infor.com) is helping more than 70,000 large and mid-size companies improve operations and drive growth across numerous industry sectors. Infor recently opened its new corporate headquarters in New York City, becoming one of the largest firms in the city's growing technology sector.

What made you feel this role at Infor was the right fit for you?

Charles (Phillips, CEO) and I had worked together at Oracle.

When the opportunity presented itself at Infor, it was the challenge that excited me, as well as being able to come to a company that was very different in profile from my previous company and really make a difference.

We came onboard in December 2010 and saw that Infor had an incredible number and range of assets at its disposal. Being part of the exec team that has harnessed those assets and delivered the results based on our strategic plan over the course of the past two years has been rewarding.

It has been an exciting ride to get us to where we are, which has been consecutive quarters of strong growth, significant strides in innovation, and positive feedback from customers and analysts in the market.

How has Infor been so effective at finding growth during challenging times?

Infor provides applications that manage critical business processes. We have a vast array of products in enterprise resource planning, financial management, enterprise asset management, human capital management, corporate performance management, and many other areas.

What's different about Infor is that our products are specialized by industry and engineered for speed. Running a business today is complicated so customers don't want to have to make a significant investment in software only to have to spend more money customizing that software for their businesses. We have focused on specific industries until now and have decades of experience in those industries, so we understand how those businesses work and we build unique functionality for those industries to help them work

better and faster. A key differentiator is that Infor dives deeper into industry specifics. We know that companies in a particular industry are different, so we offer micro-vertical solutions. A butcher and a brewer are both in the food and beverage industry, but their needs are different, and Infor recognizes that and builds tailored solutions to meet their specific needs. Our customers help us differentiate ourselves because we listen to them and look to them for feedback, and that creates a strong partnership. We view our customers as our partners and they see us in the same way.

Another reason why we have been successful is our approach around architecture. Our competitors believe in proprietary closed-system architecture whereas we believe in open, loosely coupled architecture. We have based our ION integration and application architecture on the most successful integration platform of all time: the Internet. When one application on the Internet is upgraded, it doesn't break integrations with other applications, so why would your business software be any different? Infor ION solves this critical problem.

We have also focused on how our applications look. Business applications until now have been ugly and difficult to navigate, but at Infor we consider beauty a competence. We've designed and built our interfaces to reflect consumer technology. We have our own in-house design team that provides applications that are beautiful to look at and intuitive to use, and that makes users more productive.

We're also exploring incorporating social technology, not just as a platform for employees to communicate with one another, but as a way to tie back to source applications and information to greatly enhance the speed and productivity of any business.

Do you look at growth geographically and will much of it come from overseas or are there strong opportunities in the U.S. market?

We are present in 194 countries and have a large presence also from a channel perspective – our channel partners are key to enabling us to get coverage beyond where our direct sales force can go.

In terms of geographical disbursement, North America is still a core part of our business – 50 percent of our revenue comes from there. We're happy with the way our business in North America has continued to grow, even though the economy is struggling. Internationally, we have a strong presence in all regions. Europe has been doing particularly well for us given the economic uncertainty there. Latin America and APAC continue to be strong growth economies for us, particularly the BRIC countries.

Overall, we don't expect the shift in balance among regions to change materially, but we continue to invest in all regions, because our customers are in all regions. It's a global marketplace and we're here to make it as easy as possible for our customers to access our engineers, consultants, and support professionals.

How have you engaged the workforce and attracted the talent you need?

We have reorganized the company with a laser focus on innovation and we're on track to surpass the 1,000 new developers hired mark. That says everything about what we value and how the company is becoming more product and innovation focused. We have created hundreds of new products and integrations and over 5,000 new features have been released over the past 18 months alone. Our workforce is our strength – from executive leadership on down, we have created an open, collaborative environment to encourage innovation. At our New York headquarters, nobody at the executive level, not even our CEO, has an office; we do not have a rigid hierarchical structure and by promoting our teams to take chances, we generate big ideas.

As you grow in size, will it be more difficult to maintain that entrepreneurial culture? How important is it not to lose that?

We are now at almost \$3 billion in revenue and there are few other software companies that have surpassed that size.

We're demonstrating that you can be big and maintain that speed and be devoid of bureaucracy. We don't want to stifle our people and their level of innovation. Innovation is what sets us apart. ●