

## Finding the Right Playbook

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### Jeff Boyce

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*By Sarah Rolph*

Before he joined TPSA, Jeff Boyce had just about given up on finding useful guidance. “Throughout my career,” he says, “people kept asking me to join this club or attend this event, purporting to be all about Professional Services, but I could never relate. It always turned out that they were people from pure PS players. I was fighting a different battle.”

Indeed, the battle he was fighting was made more difficult by the advice of the advocates he couldn’t relate to—the pure PS gurus were giving his management at Peregrine Systems the impression that PS should be earning more money. Jeff knew better. “Sure, we weren’t that profitable,” he says, “we always ranged around a break-even profit margin. But what management had lost sight of was our actual goal. We were doing classic software enablement. And we were growing the license business in double-digit numbers! We also had an incredible base of customers on old releases, who could not buy anything new until we got them upgraded. While that represented a certain amount of PS revenue in the upgrade, the main goal was to get them current so they could buy more licensed products.”

To get some data with which to fight that internal battle, Jeff was preparing to commission a study of the significant metrics and overall operations of firms like Peregrine when he met Thomas Lah, who was in the process of founding TPSA. “He knew what was going on with services organizations embedded inside software companies,” says Jeff. “When I told him about my challenges, he had a story for every one of them—he had already been involved in solving them, and he had documented them in his book.” Jeff had finally found an organization interested in gathering the data he cared about.

Shortly after Jeff became a founding member of TPSA, Peregrine became part of HP Software. Jeff’s first TPSA event was the April 2006 Summit. “That was really good,” says Jeff. “I was just getting integrated into HP and being asked all over again all the questions I had resolved at Peregrine.” Jeff subsequently shared his integration experiences in a talk on PS Acquisitions at the TPSA Summit in November 2006. At the time of that presentation, Jeff was just about to move to his current position at ADERANT, a global provider of business and financial management software for law firms. In a classic small-world story, when he mentioned to Thomas Lah that he was considering leaving HP for ADERANT, says Jeff, “Thomas said ‘Get out of town! I just spent two hours with Mike Kohlsdorf!’” Mike had just taken over as the new CEO of ADERANT, and in another coincidence, had been a keynote speaker at the April 2006 Summit when

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he was with IKON Office Solutions, another founding member of TPSA. "I knew Mike was in the 'TPSA school' from the way he thought and the things he was doing," says Jeff, "but I hadn't known he was already working with Thomas!"

"One of the first things I did at ADERANT was re-join TPSA," says Jeff. "That was an easy P.O.!" Because this time, the CEO was already a convert.

At ADERANT, Jeff has made good use of the TPSA Benchmark data. "PS was losing money here," he says. "The business was upside down and really suffered from a lack of meaningful metrics. All we really needed was to get back to basics. With some improvements in basic blocking and tackling, we were back on track in about six months."

TPSA data has played a strong role in bringing his new team members up to speed. "We use TPSA to do some education," he says. "We're constantly grabbing the TPSA resources, my whole team listens to the webcasts, and we mine the articles on the website for quotes and paragraphs to send to our Board of Directors; sometimes we send whole articles to the Board. In the last Board meeting, I presented some TPSA data to support a decision about the way we calculate utilization."

Jeff also continues to find great value in the TPSA Summits. "I took my entire senior management team to the latest Summit in Boston," says Jeff. "It was very beneficial to expose the rest of the team to the topics and the networking opportunities provided. The summit was the perfect segue to our '08 planning meeting."

He offers an example. "We have the opportunity to do some offshoring and some services partnering," says Jeff, "but our previous team's culture held that 'partners are bad.' We were biased against it, the attitude being 'never let anyone have any of your IP.' And yet we know there is a 10 – 20% elasticity in demand, so it makes a tremendous amount of sense to create some elasticity in your fulfillment team."

This is exactly the sort of discussion that took place at the Boston Summit, where the theme was Human Capital Management and one of the issues discussed was working with global partners. "We walked into our planning meeting perfectly prepared to lay out the resource plan and scorecard for next year," says Jeff. "Our team really appreciated the chance to have the meeting after a thoughtful, informed discussion. From now on, we'll plan to have our meeting after the TPSA Summit every year."