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Developing Custom Software Solutions for eCommerce Online Payment Systems, ERP Customization, Web and Mobile Applications, ISU Corp is helping Companies Reduce Risk while Increasing Net Profits

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CEOCFO: *Mr. Mansilla, what is the focus at ISU Corp today?*

Mr. Mansilla: The main focus for the company is to increase our client's net profits with exceptional custom software solutions. We have a team of over thirty-seven software engineers that bring to the business many, many years of experience doing business process automation and increasing sales through software innovations.

CEOCFO: *Would you give us a couple of examples of what a customer comes to you for and the steps you take to come up with the results to help them be more successful?*

Mr. Mansilla: To give you an example, this morning I went to a client meeting, which is a large manufacturer of ceramic tile. They have a pressing need to change their entire information system, because the one they have is not providing the functions that they need to increase their sales and increase their profits. So, I met with them. We laid out a plan and now we are going to bring them on to the next generation of leading-edge technologies, writing a custom application specifically for them with all the business process automation that they need so they can increase their profits. They calculated that they could increase their profits by fifteen to twenty percent by letting us write a custom solution for their business.

CEOCFO: *How do you help someone articulate or maybe recognize what they really need? How do you help a company focus on the problem so you can provide a solution?*

Mr. Mansilla: In my previous example, it was easier, because they already had a system that was becoming archived. Therefore, we are just going to take that system and make it better and bring it to the latest software technology. The question you are asking though; it happens to us all the time, especially with startup companies. We have a lot of technology startup clients where they can see that they can add value in the world by writing a formal application or a web application and then they come to us. First of all, what we do is try to validate the market need for what they want to achieve and then try to find the right technology to develop the software on. Then what we offer is to write a minimum viable solution, which is basically the very basic skeleton of the idea that they have, so that they can test it in the market. Once it is tested in the market and they know that they can make money with it, then we go ahead and continue designing the full application.

CEOCFO: *Do many companies recognize the value in that approach or do you need to convince them that is a good way to go?*

Mr. Mansilla: Many companies actually agree with us, because our strategy and our process is about reducing their risk. If we were a company without values we would try just to sell as much as we can, and we have to try to make the biggest projects as we can, regardless of our clients. However, our value seems to increase our clients' net profits with our work. Therefore, as a result, our mandate is to advise them and consult with them on the best and most efficient way to write the

software for them that will actually bring them profit and value to their company. When you come with an honest approach, when you come with humbleness and with a willingness to make your client thrive and go to the next level, of course they are going to agree with you!

CEOCFO: Do you find that people recognize that in the beginning or is it sometimes a struggle for them to understand you really are looking out for your clients?

Mr. Mansilla: Most of the time it is easy, because they can see the honesty in my eyes and also because we are so successful that we have the privilege of selecting which clients we work for. For example, even though a client might want us to customize a piece of software, if we find after our investigation that the software is not going to make a profit or it is not going to solve their problem, we will not take them as a client. We will tell them that and we advise against it. We have many, many prospects that we have turned down because of this reason. Sometimes we have clients that have a positive idea, but the cost of writing the software is too much and they do not have the cash flow to sustain them. That is another reason why we would not engage with a client. We try to minimize their cost by doing it in phases and making sure that what we are writing is going to add value for them. When you look at my experience with my clients and all the references that we have and all the awards that we have won, it is very hard for people not to listen to us.

“For us, our values are a living exercise and we practice them every single day of our business life.” - David Mansilla, B.Sc., CPA

CEOCFO: When you are designing and working on custom software, what might you look at that less experienced people do not recognize?

Mr. Mansilla: The first thing that less experienced people do is take what the client tells them literally. For example, the client says, “I need a building that has five bathrooms and two bedrooms.” Then the less experienced will say, “Sure, I will build you five bathrooms and two bedrooms. When the client asks us for that request, we would say, “Why would you need five bathrooms and two bedrooms? Would it not be better to have five bedrooms and two bathrooms?” Then we will challenge their request and they will find that their request does not make sense. In a business process, it is not easy to figure that out. However, because we have been doing this for over fourteen years we are very good at that. We are very good at catching ideas that need refining before they become a software reality.

CEOCFO: How do you design a solution that is good for today, but takes into account that in six months there might be something, a better approach or a better piece of software? How do you put the two together; the current need and what might be down the line, since things change so quickly?

Mr. Mansilla: When we build the architecture for any software project, we make sure we take into account the possibility of expansions in the future, without making the expansions. To give you an idea, imagine that you are hired to build a five-story building, but the owner tells you that maybe they might need another five stories in five years from now. What we do is we make the foundation that sustains ten stories, but we only build it for five stories. Therefore, when they call us back in five years and say that they need those other five floors, then we are ready, because we do not have to change the foundation. We can just add on to the one that we are already created. That is one of the things that we do best when we are laying down the software. Because of this, our clients can have a bigger return on their investment and they can keep growing their technology. Having said that though, sometimes technology becomes outdated, which is why the software lifecycle for any given company is no more than ten years. If someone stays with the same software application for more than ten years they will start to lose the value of the software and they will start to create more risk of business process interruption due to the aging of the technology. It's like driving a car. I have companies that run their software for fifteen, twenty years and by the time they decide to start upgrading or they start to change their minds it is too late, and they face serious problems, to the point that they could actually run out of business.

CEOCFO: Would you tell us about HubLinked?

Mr. Mansilla: When we created our culture back in 2012/2013, we set goals within our teams to be able to become a better company, to be able to provide more value to the world. Some of those values were transparency, honesty, exceptional customer services and maximum communication to lower risk of trouble. Because of this, I realized that I needed to write a piece of software that would allow us to communicate with our clients better in order to provide transparency on whatever project we were working on for them. Also, it would raise awareness of the cultural issues that we're facing and help bring everyone together into one room. That is why we created HubLinked. HubLinked is a private social application in which we run all of our software projects and it allows us to communicate with our clients. It tells our clients what we are working on, on a daily basis. All these details get recorded and they get uploaded to HubLinked. All the conversations happen in HubLinked. All the human organization of skills are done in HubLinked. We organize services

into portals and one project as if it were in one portal, and we upload all the documents there. Therefore, it helps us keep all these organizations organized in one place. It is a big part of why we are successful, because we are actually automating our profits through this platform.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic range today? Where are your clients?*

Mr. Mansilla: They are mostly in the USA and Canada. We do have a client in Spain and a client in Panama, but the clients outside of North America are more or less sporadic.

CEOCFO: *How do people find ISU? You mentioned references and I am guessing that most of it is word of mouth. However, are there other means where people may come across or may know to look for ISU?*

Mr. Mansilla: Yes. We have a beautiful marketing campaign running all the time on Facebook that brings in leads. Funny enough, it does not mention anything about software development. It's just about increasing one's personal values on becoming a better person. We are about to launch a YouTube campaign too, where we are going to start teaching entrepreneurs how to run a successful software project to increase their profits. That is the journey we are about to start in February and we are very hopeful that that is going to bring a lot of leads, too. Believe it or not, many companies also find us on LinkedIn. We have a big LinkedIn presence and our Google analytics are very well done. We have been in the marketplace since 2005, so a lot of people find us through Google, too.

CEOCFO: *Are there particular types of projects you like or would do more of, given the opportunity?*

Mr. Mansilla: Our target market is midsize companies; \$10 million to \$100 million. There are some companies that we have outside of that; companies that reach \$1 billion valuations. For example, one of our clients is General Electric Energy. However, as I said, our target audience is usually between \$10 million and \$100 million. We like to work for companies in the financial industry, so many of our clients are insurance brokers. We also do a lot of work with startup companies that are interested in setting up a technology program that can fulfill a business need. As a result, we do many blockchain e-commerce applications. We started to do a lot of artificial intelligence applications in the startup world. We also have many clients in the laboratory management systems, so lab testing facilities will hire us to build their entire process automation.

CEOCFO: *What do you look for in your people? How do you know when someone is right for ISU?*

Mr. Mansilla: That is the hardest. Our rolodex for hiring is bigger than our rolodex of prospects of clients. That is because it is really hard to start working for us. It's because we have been able to form a beautiful culture, we do not want to ruin it, so we really have to make sure that everyone that we hire fits the culture and has the right values. As a result, it takes between a month and a half to four months of interviews and hiring processes for someone to get accepted. The beautiful part, however, is that because we have a good reputation in the market, we have many developers that want to work for us. We tell them about our self-education process, so even though we might not have current opportunity for them, they go through all the exams and all the tests of the evaluation so that they are certified, so that as soon as we find an opportunity they will get called first, because they are already prepared. In our interview process, we try to make sure that people have exceptional skills and are exceptional on a personal level as well, but we also take the opportunity to teach them our ways and to teach them our culture. Therefore, there is a great deal of research and development within the interview process. It is almost like a learning experience for them. You know what; many people are not willing to go through that, which is good, because then we have the people that really want to work for us and they are able to sustain our interviewing process. It becomes more like a boot camp that they have to go through.

CEOCFO: *The company, and you personally, have won a number of awards over the last few years. What stands out? What is most meaningful for you?*

Mr. Mansilla: Last year we were blessed to get awarded with the Canadian Business Excellence Award in the technology section. When we got nominated, we did not believe it and then when we won, it was incredible! The celebration was beautiful! It was sponsored by the biggest newspaper in Canada, the Globe and Mail. It was done in their building in downtown Toronto. The honor represents the fact that we are going in the right direction, that our culture is growing and that our clients are appreciating our work.

CEOCFO: *What has changed in your approach over the years?*

Mr. Mansilla: A lot has changed! As the leader, I had to completely transform myself in order to realize that my culture needed to improve, that the quality of the people we hire needed to improve and also have values that are actually life values. That is because many companies put a plaque on their wall stating their values, but no one practices those values. For us, our values are a living exercise and we practice them every single day of our business life. That has changed the company dramatically, because that reflects honesty. When you are honest and transparent, people can

sense that. Then business just comes. We doubled our business last year, by the way! We doubled in size last year, just because people are beginning to realize that our transparency, our honesty and our culture is exceptional, so they really want to work with us.

CEOCFO: *What is next for ISU Corp?*

Mr. Mansilla: I am completely focused on exponential growth as part of the company transformation that we have been experiencing since 2013. We have started to add a lot of contributions. We began with providing lunch and breakfast for thirty kids in a school located in a very poor area of Guatemala. Now, we have increased it to eighty kids. Every single day of the year, they get breakfast and lunch. Our goal is to make it to five hundred kids and keep moving forward. Therefore, we want to keep growing the business. We want to keep blessing more companies with our services and also blessing more people that we would want to join our team. The end result is that we can grab a big portion of those earnings and continue our work with trying to provide hot meals to children in need in Guatemala.

CEOCFO: *It is clear that you are having a really good time! Did you realize that this would be all that it is today when you first started? Did you expect to like it so much, to enjoy creating the business and growing and developing ISU?*

Mr. Mansilla: No, not at all! It was always my dream to have my own business. I tried it once after I graduated from Computer Science and I almost went bankrupt, but I was blessed enough to sell the business and with that sale, I paid off my debt. Then, I went and got a real job and then ten years later I tried again with ISU, but it was probably one of the most fearful things I have done in my life! It took a lot of courage to leave a high paying job. I worked in a VP position in different companies and had a beautiful salary and a beautiful package. Then to leave all of that and go into the unknown was hard for me! The first four years was just survival mode, "How can we have enough to pay the bills." Now, it's amazing. Now it's not, "How can I have enough." Now, it's "How can I be more thankful for all of the abundance that I have? How can I grow even more to keep blessing this world?" I never thought this would happen! To be honest with you, we almost went bankrupt a couple of times throughout our fourteen years in the business and it is because our values were not right. We were not hiring the right people and our reason and our *why* was not correct. Now that everything is aligned, it's just growing. It's a blessing. It's hard work still! Projects are super hard. The projects that we are getting are because many companies like us do not want to do it because they are so complicated. Life is not easy, but I get excited in the morning when I come to the office. I cannot wait for Monday to show up and all of our employees are the same way and it is because we share the same values and we are pulling the company towards the same direction.