

Software Developer and Systems Integrator, Illumisoft is Helping Healthcare Companies Improve Operations, Research and the Clinical Use of Technology



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Interview conducted by:
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"A lot of their focus has been on making sure it is secure rather than optimizing the processes" Dan Prince

CEOCFO: *Mr. Prince, what is the concept behind illumisoft, and what is your current focus?*

Mr. Prince: Healthcare innovation technology is what we love to do. We work with people in and around healthcare to help them improve operations, research, or the clinical use of technology. Specifically, we are custom software developers, but we are also systems integrators and have a lot of experience integrating with some of the larger EHRs and the different tools used in many hospitals to manage operations.

CEOCFO: *Why is it so hard for the EHRs to get it right or just user-friendly or all the things that one would want both as a patient sometimes and as an organization? Why is it so challenging?*

Mr. Prince: Way back in the early 90s, somebody came up with the idea to standardize how health data is transmitted, something called HL7, which stands for Health Level Seven, I think. It's a protocol intended to help healthcare providers utilize each other's information. It was a great idea. Unfortunately, broadly implemented inconsistently, and because of that, the data is difficult share. Most of the time, it requires complex mapping from field to field and data type to a different data type. It's practically unique for each system-to-system integration. There really needs to be more standardization because nobody has their data in the same format.

As institutions are beginning to leverage the cloud, their focus has shifted to security. As they are moving this sensitive data around and storing it in a cost-efficient location, a lot of their focus has been on making sure it is secure rather than optimizing the processes that moved that data around and got it to where it needs to go.

CEOCFO: *Would you give us a few examples of an organization that turns to illumisoft and what they might ask you to do, and how you come up with a solution?*

Mr. Prince: Recently, a company was referred to us because we had done something similar to what they were wanting to do. They had already built an MVP and were interested in getting some consultation from a second development team on what it might take to build version 2. We always begin our engagement by listening and asking a lot of questions. Our goals are to get to a deep understanding of what it is they are trying to do, how they envision people will use it, and where they hope to go in the future. Getting an idea of the big vision for the business always affects how we design a solution.

After we explored their existing solution, we told them we could do it - but - that they were heading in the wrong direction. Their choice of cloud provider and the frameworks they had selected to build their mobile app did not have all the features that their product required. So they were writing these features themselves at the cost of about \$10 to \$20 thousand. Had they chosen the other cloud vendor, those features would have been available out of the box, and they would get any updates to that provider's offering automatically and wouldn't have had to pay to maintain their custom code. That was an uninformed decision that unfortunately happens a lot when software partners don't help their clients to understand the impact of technical decisions and lead them down a path that isn't good for their business. Anyway, as technology consultants often working with entrepreneurs or grant-funded researchers, we can't assume that our clients have the luxury of limitless funds. We always make sure that we prioritize sustainability and the total cost of ownership.

CEOCFO: *Are you surprised that more organizations do not turn to you before they start doing something?*

Mr. Prince: Not anymore. I have long since gained a pretty good insight into how these organizations operate or are typically driven. The improvements and innovations within the hospital can come from anybody that has an idea and is vocal enough. Academics are incredibly smart, and their contributions *should* be developed into the commercial space and made available. However, organizations do not often know the best way to get started. Starting somewhere is always better than not starting at all, but they often come to us after having already started. We are working to make ourselves available as resources earlier in the process so that we can help walk the journey with them.

CEOCFO: *How do you help your clients with the trepidation of making a change?*

Mr. Prince: Transparency. We cannot really fix the trepidation; what we can do is be honest, open, and transparent with them throughout the entire process. One way that we make sure that they are not surprised

by something that we deliver is that we implement continuous integration and continuous delivery. So as soon as we make changes to our codebase, it gets compiled and tested automatically by a set of software that exercises the solution and validates that it runs bug-free. With this implementation strategy, clients do not have to wait to test changes - they have regular access to working software throughout the development lifecycle.

CEO CFO: *You work with musicians, academic researchers, healthcare companies, and hospitals. Are there projects that you prefer over others given a choice, or is a project a project?*

Mr. Prince: We used to market our expertise to every industry. We were geared towards larger, system-wide, and enterprise-wide projects. I have personally designed and architected enterprise-wide software for long enough that I can do it very well and make sure that everything is working without a hitch, so our model used to be that we would take on any client as long as the system complexity was high enough that we knew our value would be added. But with our years of work within the healthcare industry, we recognized that we were especially motivated by projects that have a fundamental social value – for example, a project that positively affects the lives of children with Type I Diabetes.

Everything I do is geared toward seeing an expression of delight on my client's face when we deliver above expectations, and some of my happiest experiences have come from seeing the positive impacts of building solutions within pediatric health. It is certainly possible to impact lives for the better outside of the healthcare industry, but this industry is very close to the heart.

CEO CFO: *Do you do much outreach these days and do you see illumisoft in the industry?*

Mr. Prince: We are well-known in Kansas City. We do a little outreach to stay top-of-mind, you know, letting people know that we appreciate them and that we're here if they need us. We are now working on more outreach outside of the Kansas City area to extend our business. I think there are a lot more people that we can help. If making healthcare better is our mission and patient experience better, then limiting it to the people in Kansas City goes against that mission.

Health innovation projects have a very long revenue cycle, and we will talk to people for two years before they actually get the funding to begin the project. When you love what you do, you really talk to the people that you want to work in your business. It seems I have been lucky but I have seen a common thread between all of us, we all like doing this kind of work and seeing the delight on our clients' faces and knowing behind all of that, we are doing something to help.

