



Serge Lachapelle

Summary

I manage technology, R&D and the business end of R&D. I know firsthand the delicate balance that must be maintained to succeed in developing software.

As an experienced developer, my management style is very much hands on. I like to work with people and love to follow the human dynamics of large software projects. In my view, you have to manage every day of a project like it was the last...A little discipline and a lot of joy go a long way when managing complex tasks...

Naturally, working in Quebec, I got very good at managing SR&ED tax credits. I navigate the process well and excel at managing the financial side of software development. I also completed several projects in collaboration with the CNRC. I enjoy the research part of the work very much.

At 52, I still get excited by technology and the people that make it work.

Experience:

Executive vice president at JCMB Technology Inc November 1996 – October 2008 (12 years)

JCMB creates GIS, CIS and OMS software products and provides data services for the electric utility industry although they also work for gas and water utilities on occasion.

I was responsible for all technology related activities, including:

- ITCs.(SR&ED)
- Budgeting and financial planning
- Software development (from concept to implementation)
- Quality management
- Executive level technical communications (sales and projects)
- Technical support

- Technical sales support

Although we developed software products, very few of our sales involved standard product delivery. In our industry, most software is customized to fit the customer's requirements and IT infrastructure. This imposes tight management of software and project requirements. Change management was an important part of our delivery process and I managed it like a supplemental revenue stream.

Our customers were amongst the largest in the industry, including but not limited to:

- Nevada Power (now Sierra power)
- North East Utilities
- Commonwealth Edison
- Consolidated Edison
- Hydro Quebec
- SDGE

At the height of the Hydro Quebec DESCARTE project we had 150 employees on 3 shifts and 20 people in the R&D department. I also shared some operational responsibilities with the CEO with regards to building management and production support.

Director at M3i Systems (now part of CGI) January 1990 – October 1996 (6 years 10 months)

M3i systems were at the time, a subsidiary of Hydro Quebec. M3i developed software for the electric distribution market, more specifically Outage Management Systems (OMS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

I was responsible for R&D in the GIS side of the business and was also tasked with the production of the scientific reporting portion of the ITCs (SR & ED). I worked on multiple government programs (CNRC) and created bridges with academia (through CRIM and select universities).

I was also responsible for the production of mapping data and was managing a department of 80 data capture technicians in addition to the 15 developers on the research side.

**Consultant, Outage Management System at Hydro Québec
January 1988 – January 1990 (2 years 1 month)**

I worked as a developer and project manager in distribution operation on outage management software (CED/Micro).

Because of my graphics background, I was mostly involved with the user interface areas of the OMS system. The graphical user interactions involved the display of continuous maps. We take the Google Maps like systems for granted today, but back in 1988 creating such systems was quite a technological challenge. We were limited with the current day PCs and had to resort to external graphics processors (my specialty at the time). Those were pioneering days...

**Developer, Graphics firmware and interfaces at Matrox
January 1985 – January 1988 (3 years 1 month)**

Developed firmware for graphics engines and also created the device drivers required to adapt software for their use. I worked mostly in assembler and C.

These were the days of the big square pixels on PC screens. At the time, Matrox was creating high resolution graphics engine for high end applications such as medical imaging, cad and military simulation. The work was very exciting and I learned a lot there. I was quite creative and was often given special projects to work on. I also worked with marketing and sales a lot. I created the first Autocad ADE Unix driver in 1987 that used external display lists to create fast autonomous zooms on the display card. We don't have to resort to those kinds of tricks today but it was a big deal back then. Those drivers sold graphics cards...

**Developer, Firmware Videoway product at Videotron
January 1983 – January 1985 (2 years 1 month)**

I developed firmware, Graphics, TCP/IP and X25 low level protocol software for cable based communication.

**Software developer at Micom / Philips
January 1980 – January 1983 (3 years 1 month)**

I developed software and hardware solutions for the word processing market. These were the pioneering days of the 8008, 8080 and Z80 processors...

Education

Curiosity and Interest drove my personal studies

I was trained on the job by the high technology business itself...

1980 – 2010

It is always uneasy for me to present how my knowledge was acquired. It just does not fit in any previously beaten path as I am self-taught. In my 27 years of high tech, I was privileged to meet employers that were able to appreciate my abilities and put me in situations that enabled me to grow professionally. My road to knowledge was driven by interest and curiosity, my career was created entirely outside of the box.

It took me 10 years to establish myself as a highly technical programmer and the next 17 to gravitate towards technical management. Because I came to management from a technical background, I developed a hands-on approach to software management. I don't believe the myth is so mythical after all; time in software development is mostly a human issue.

Bottom line... Discovery has been and is still the best motivator for me. It brings me joy to see projects and people evolve as we create teams and technology. ...so I am quite happy to have found a school where I don't think anyone ever graduates... I can't see the day where I will stop learning.