

We left Informatica. Now you can, too.

A conversation with the former co-founder and CTO of Informatica about modern data integration for the cloud.

Can a business in 2017 effectively run on 25-year-old technology? Both logic and intuition say it can't. Yet that is exactly what thousands of companies attempt to do today by using Informatica for data integration. Founded in 1992, Informatica is now a billion-dollar company, with legacy technology that remains a fixture in enterprise technology environments.

But it doesn't have to be. SnapLogic, led by the former CEO and co-founder of Informatica and its former CTO, has reinvented data integration for the modern enterprise. Built for the cloud, and to meet users' insatiable demands for data access, SnapLogic's elastic integration platform as a service (iPaaS) solution connects cloud applications and data far faster and easier than any legacy platform.

This paper captures the conversation between Gaurav Dhillon, SnapLogic CEO and founder, and James Markarian, SnapLogic CTO, who discuss the business reasons and technology factors driving modern enterprises to enthusiastically embrace SnapLogic data integration, built for the cloud.

Q Let's talk about the modern enterprise and how Informatica is unable to keep pace with the needs of today's businesses.

James Markarian: When Informatica was created, it was the best technology for data integration at the time. The world was a lot simpler in 1992: there were five databases that mattered, and they were all largely the same. There were just a few ERP [enterprise resource planning] systems - Oracle, SAP and a young PeopleSoft.

Founded in 2006 by Gaurav Dhillon, the co-founder of Informatica, SnapLogic is the leading Enterprise Integration Cloud company, reinventing data integration for the modern enterprise.

Gaurav Dhillon
▼ CEO SnapLogic

James Markarian
CTO SnapLogic ▼



Gaurav Dhillon: Epically important, there was no world wide web. Shocking!

JM: [Laughs] Right. But at the time, Informatica came along with a paradigm that was better. It was ideally suited to the scale-up UNIX platforms of that era.

Fast-forward 25 years to 2017. Almost everything about that primordial landscape, when Informatica roamed the world, is different. For example, now there's the web, as Gaurav pointed out. There's also the cloud, NoSQL databases, and best of breed application strategies that are actually viable. None of these existed when Informatica started. You can go down the list and every assumption from that time – the compute platform, scale-up/scale-out, data types, data volumes and data formats – is different.

By any standard, if you look at any company architected for one set of circumstances, it would have trouble keeping up with these kinds of fundamental landscape changes. Informatica customers are having to deal with all of these landscape changes simultaneously, with the newest changes being a flood of IoT [Internet of Things] data and big data technologies like Hadoop. Is it reasonable to think that a software company, vintage 1992, would keep up? It is not.

So what do you need? A clean slate. It's a reality that businesses and people have jobs to do, and they need the right tech for current problems. For data integration, that technology, that clean slate, happens to be SnapLogic.

GD: James, you covered the landscape really well. But let's look at the problem from another perspective. Let's say you're a CIO of a company that made an enterprise decision around Informatica in the last century. You inherited that environment. You may or may not have been the person who made that decision, but here you are, running an Informatica shop.

Going forward, does it make sense to run a company on Informatica? The truthful answer is, it can, just as you can run a modern company on a mainframe. You can also ride a horse to the office. But is it something you should do? That's where I would say "no." Because the friction between your current requirements and the problems

you solve today, and the way you solve them, relative to the requirements that were well addressed by Informatica's products 25 years ago, are fundamentally different.

It's true that the core guts of what is still Informatica – the underlying engine, the metadata, the user interface and so on – have to some extent been replenished. But they are fundamentally still fixed in the past. It's like a mainframe; you can go from water cooling to air cooling, but fundamentally it's still a mainframe.

Q So what's the business impact of the points you both raised?

GD: The direct path between a problem and a solution is to use appropriate technologies that are in synch with the problems being solved, in the times and the budget that are available today. That is really the crux of Informatica inheritance versus the SnapLogic future.

IT and business people always think about sunk costs, and they don't want to give up on sunk costs. But they have to think about sunk opportunity. Today, most enterprises are making a conscious decision to stop throwing good money after bad on their application portfolios. They recognize they can't lose out on more opportunities. They are switching to modern enterprise SaaS [software as a service]. As a result, there's been a huge shift toward solutions like Salesforce, Workday and ServiceNow; companies that swore they would never give up on-premise software are moving their application computing to the cloud.

In light of that, in a world that has gone "cloudy" and offers new, ultra-modern technology at commodity prices, you start to arrive at a realization, "We ought to modernize. We should give up on the sunk costs and instead think of the sunk opportunity of persisting with clunky old technology."

This is the "match point" that SnapLogic can defend into eternity. Hundreds of customers around the globe testify to that. Almost all of these companies, our customers, had some flavor of Informatica or its competitor, and

they have made the choice to move to SnapLogic. Some have moved completely, in a big bang, and others have side-by-side projects and will migrate completely to SnapLogic over time.

Q That's pretty meta. What about everyday users? What does SnapLogic have to offer?

GD: We live in an age where people expect multiple utility. It's a good thing – if you've ever held an iPhone, you're not ever going back to a flip phone. You want your phone, camera, music player and more in one device. As they teach you in law school, you can't "unring the bell."

Expectations for multiple utility are all over the workplace. Millennials, who are now a big force in the working world, are approaching the data consumption challenge with a clean slate. They say it should be easy, like a smartphone, and be self-service. Once again, millennials are looking for multiple utility.

This is an area where SnapLogic trumps legacy technologies. On its best day, Informatica creates ETLs [extract, transfer, loads] and has some other capabilities added on. But at its core, Informatica was designed to deal with batch, relational, ETL-like kinds of problems.

From day one, SnapLogic has been designed to solve all kinds of data-in-flight problems in the enterprise. These include, as we called them in the last century, application integration problems like connecting Salesforce with SAP, or data integration problems, providing information feeds to solve modern analytic sorts of questions. We can use SnapLogic to solve problems with technologies that weren't widely available in the last century like predictive analytics, machine learning, or wiring up large industrial enterprises with IoT sensors, to give you new profit pools and help do a better job of building products.

That's the kind of multiple utility that people expect from their technology – it's not about feeds or speeds, it's about having a smart phone versus having a separate phone, camera and music player. That's just so '90s, you know?

JM: I would add, our approach is designed to be compatible with the changing role of IT – the role is changing, but the importance of IT isn't. It's like parenting; as your kids grow your role changes. It's less about helicoptering and more about enabling. Parents don't become less important, but their role changes.

This is a good analog, in my view, to the changing role of enterprise IT. You want to enable users because, like with parents and kids, it's hard for IT to keep up with the pace of growth and change in the business. If IT tries to control too much at some point IT starts holding the business back.

Smart IT organizations have realized their role in the modern enterprise is to help their business partners become more successful. SnapLogic is a vital piece of that technology; we help IT organizations to give their users the self-service they need, helping the lines of business grow to their potential instead of holding them back.

Q How easy is it to get started with SnapLogic?

GD: It's very straightforward. Customers are up and running in a day or two. It's like your smartphone – where is the instruction manual for your smartphone? It doesn't exist. You get it, you play with it a bit and pretty soon you're doing stuff on your phone.

JM: As quickly as customers can describe their problems to us, we can show them something working. It's that easy. Customers are often blown away by how quickly we're able to solve their problem. With respect to Informatica and other integration technologies, what SnapLogic was able to show them in minutes, it took their developers or consultants weeks or months to work on, and still haven't delivered. They can't deliver quickly due to the limitations of the underlying technology.

These are not subtle differences. SnapLogic is radically different than anything they've seen. Seriously, it's kind of like discovering fire.

GD: SnapLogic's great breakthrough here, our big innovation, is that we have consumerized the dungeon-like, dark problem of integration. Integration used to be a big, boring problem relegated to the back office. We've brought it from the dungeon to the front office and into the light. It is amazing to see how people use our product. They go from one user to hundreds of users as they get access to data in a secure, organized and appropriately access-controlled manner. But you don't have a cast of thousands of IT people enabling all this. You have hundreds of users who help themselves. This is the right model for the modern enterprise.

Q What's your parting shot? Why do you think companies should leave Informatica for SnapLogic?

GD: "Quantum leap" comes to mind. Fundamentally, I believe that SnapLogic is 10 times better than Informatica. That's a design goal, and it's also a necessary and sufficient condition for success. If a start-up is going to survive, it's got to have some 10x factor, some quanta of a value proposition. A start-up has to solve a problem 10 times better than an incumbent in order to be successful. People at SnapLogic have great track records and backgrounds in data, but the customer who's making a decision to go with us needs to know that our product gives them something amazing. It doesn't matter who that is; the solution can come from a bunch of hot-shot young people or more experienced veterans. But the quanta over the state of the art – the best-of-the-best of the incumbents – is vital. SnapLogic can fluently solve enterprise data problems almost as they are happening. That has a "wow" factor people experience when they harness the power of our data integration technology.

Q In addition to "wow," what else do customers say?

GD: Let me give you a customer quote, which is actually from a young CEO of a hot company that's a household name. He said, "Look, we've got an 'ERP of one' by using SnapLogic – a totally customized enterprise information environment. We can buy the best-of-the-best SaaS offerings, and then with SnapLogic, integrate them into a bespoke ERP system that would cost a bajillion dollars to build ourselves. We can custom mix and match the capabilities that uniquely fit us. We got the bespoke suit at off-the-rack prices by using SnapLogic to customize our enterprise environment."

To my mind, that's the big payoff, the value, and a really good way to think about SnapLogic's role. We are able to give our customer an "ERP of one" faster and cheaper than they could have ever imagined. This is where the world is going, because of the vanishingly low prices of compute power and storage, and cloud computing. Today you literally can, without a huge outlay, do all sorts of nifty things. We're seeing the rise of very focused sets of SaaS value props, SaaS applications, iPhone apps and Android apps that are letting you build your own world. But you need the glue to make that happen. You need the glue to bring it all together. That glue is SnapLogic.

I've done a lot of things in my career, including co-founding both Informatica and SnapLogic. The most heartening thing, for me, is to hear our customers affirm that they can get whatever data and capabilities they need to run their business from a variety of choices, and bring it all together with SnapLogic.

“ SnapLogic is functionally rich and well-proven for a variety of use cases. It supports hybrid deployments and provides rich and differentiating features for analytics and big data integration. ”

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SnapLogic is the leading Enterprise Integration Cloud company. Our self-service integration platform makes it fast and easy to connect applications, data and things. Hundreds of customers across the global 2000 - including Adobe, AstraZeneca, Box, Capital One, GameStop, Verizon and Wendy's - rely on SnapLogic to automate business processes, accelerate analytics and drive digital transformation. SnapLogic was founded by data industry veteran Gaurav Dhillon and is backed by blue-chip investors including Andreessen Horowitz, Capital One, Ignition Partners, Microsoft, Triangle Peak Partners and Vitruvian Partners. Learn more at www.snaplogic.com

