



By Andrea Obston  
CLDA Director of Public Relations

# Technology

## The Key to a Long-Lived Company

Companies that have lived long and productive lives depend upon technology for their very survival. Escalating customer demands, the need to provide instantaneous answers to their questions and the ability to provide truly personalized service all cry out for the latest technology.

We asked two veterans with first-hand experience delivering technology solutions to members of the customized logistics and delivery industry for their take on the role technology plays in company longevity. Here's what we heard from Todd Wiebe, VP of Enterprise Sales for CXT Software and Patrick Scardilli, VP Sales & Marketing for Key Software Systems:

**CLD Magazine: Set the stage for us by telling us how your company works with members of our industry.**

**WIEBE:** CXT Software is a leading provider of delivery software technology. We provide last mile delivery and logistics software to manage on-demand, routed and distribution delivery operations. The company offers an extensive software product suite including X Dispatch (on-demand order, courier resource management, invoicing and settlement), X Route (route and distribution logistics management), X Mobile (mobile application with GPS tracking), Rapidship (online ordering and tracking), and X Stream (application and data integration).

**SCARDILLI:** Key Software Systems supplies dispatch, operations, final mile, distribution and mobile communication software solutions to carriers and shippers. Throughout all of our product lines, our focus is on providing simple solutions to complex problems, designed to enhance the user experience.

**CLD Magazine Why is technology the key to building a company that lasts?**

**WIEBE:** It is very difficult to scale a company without technology. The operational and cost efficiencies that good technology can provide are unmatched. We always say you can throw more people at an issue or make use of technology. In most cases technology comes out the winner across the board. Also, we live in the Amazon/Uber age where customers have very high levels of expectations for what software can do. In some ways, the customer is now categorizing technology into "old school" and "new school." This means you have to stay current, or you will fall behind.

**SCARDILLI:** Technology lives and breathes to solve problems and challenges. Problems and challenges for companies of all ages are vast, complex at times and always evolving. Leveraging technology maximizes a company's resources to scale, introduces automation, produces measurable results in streamlining operations and opens communication to customers and drivers. Deploying tech drives down operational overhead and increases margins compared to manually performing those tasks. As companies grow and achieve longevity, the challenges and goals of the business evolve in tandem with customer expectations. Technology helps bridge the gap between those challenges and expectations.

*CLD Magazine Over the years, what changes in technology have helped companies survive and thrive?*

**WIEBE:** In the delivery industry, many technology changes have been strongly driven by the customers or shippers. Bar code scanning and ePOD are just a few examples. For many years simply responding to what customers and shippers wanted was good enough. You could simply react to what the market demanded. But, there has been a shift in recent years with a new generation of business owners. Many of them are taking a more proactive approach to technology to get an edge on the competition.

**SCARDILLI:** Two changes immediately come to mind: mobile communications and system integration. First, let's talk about mobile communications: Before the smartphone era businesses were looking to streamline the driver process, while meeting their customers demand for barcode scanning and package level tracking data. At that time, ruggedized handheld devices or mobile computers were the best option. With price points that went from almost-reasonable to ridiculous, companies had a difficult time both financing and managing these devices day-to-day. When smartphones entered the market they offered low-cost to no-cost options to

business owners. They also supported the Bring Your Own Device model approach and opened new possibilities for technology companies to design elegant, yet simple solutions on advanced platforms. When it comes to system integrations there have been some growing pains. I believe 2005 was when our company built our first EDI for a large office supply company. The development path for that integration was long, arduous, and expensive. Fourteen years later, the advancement of API's has taken projects that were six to nine months for development, down to a few weeks or days. The financial investment has dropped from several thousand dollars for an integration to hundreds, and in some cases, to zero. These changes have helped businesses lower the cost of implementation, reduced deployment time and increased win rates for new business.

*CLD Magazine: How has technology contributed to companies' robust bottom line and financial stability?*

**WIEBE:** When managed properly, technology can create and sustain operational efficiencies that help drive increased profits. Customers perceive companies with good technology as being better partners to work with and having more advanced capabilities. Finally, employees view the use of advanced technology as a way to improve their work experience. They also see these investments in technology as a demonstration that the company is serious about looking to the future.

**SCARDILLI:** Businesses have been able to leverage technology to help them scale without the need for additional staff. With an automated environment, for example, a company can grow order volume by a significant percentage year-over-year before thinking about adding staff. The implementation of automated route optimization is a prime example of this. When in place, the system analyzes order level and package level data. This takes planning time from hours to minutes. These systems also

increase capacity and elevate performance. Dashboard analytics and KPIs have provided companies the ability to quickly visualize potential pitfalls or opportunities that occur day-to-day, month-to-month or even minute-by-minute. They empower the people who are driving the company to make critical, time-sensitive business decisions that affect their stability and financial wellbeing.

***CLD Magazine: How do long-lived companies make the most of technology as a competitive advantage?***

**WIEBE:** The real purpose of technology is to add value to the customer and the operation. You can't expect to just flip a switch and say you have technology and expect customers to come flooding in. It takes work to really create an advantage with technology. In most companies this means having the right staff in place to manage and execute on your technology plan. Investing in putting a good IT person on the team can make a huge difference.

**SCARDILLI:** These companies have a plan in place to provide continuous education on their technology and encourage engagement with their technology providers. The most successful companies have a plan in place to understand and implement the new technology that their provider deploys. When new enhancements are released, they use their test environment to gauge what changes would occur when that technology is deployed to their internal teams, mobile workforce, and customers. The companies that leverage technology the most effectively are continuously learning and engaged with their providers to push the conversation and uncover other features or functions of the software that can strengthen their teams or relationships with customers. These companies provide valuable feedback to their technology providers on industry trends and customers asks. They attend webinars, trade shows like the Final Mile Forum & Expo and user conferences. The technology is such a critical part of their business' success that they build technolo-

gy into their sales presentations to show how they differentiate themselves from competitors. Even if two businesses are using the same platform, the way they think about and incorporate the technology into their new business presentations can easily create separation.

***CLD Magazine: What has been the impact on companies that have been resistant to staying up-to-date on the technology they use?***

**WIEBE:** These companies fall behind and many end up going out of business. Or, they have customers that start requiring certain things only technology can provide. It really becomes a mindset issue. Do they think of the software as a necessary evil or a strategic part of the operation? Rolling out software must be aligned properly with corporate culture or it won't work very well.

**SCARDILLI:** The ultimate impact for companies that resist up-to-date technology is losing the customer, driver or dispatcher that it took you so long to get in the first place. Those individuals and companies will seek to work with a company that is delivering a better experience. That typically means a company with the right technology in place.

***CLD Magazine: What else can you add about technology's contribution to companies that last?***

**WIEBE:** Ongoing training is key to the success of using technology and software. Best practices point to having solid training plan for all staff.

**SCARDILLI:** I agree, ongoing training is vital and provides a strong foundation for success as the business grows.

***Want to know more about our industry's hottest trends in technology? Find CXT Software (Booths 100 and 102) and Key Software Systems (Booths 310 and 312) at the Final Mile Forum & Expo.***