

Lester Hightower

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CTO / CIO / IT Director / Business Development Executive

A multi-talented senior executive with more than 15 years of successful, diverse and progressive experience in various information technology positions, including roles as VP and CTO, Information Systems Director, Technology Entrepreneur, and Lead Developer. Deep understanding of macro- and micro-economics and Software as a Service (SaaS) business models. Leveraged the benefits of open-source software to build and grow a prominent SaaS provider to the railroad industry that concurrently served *Fortune* 500 and quite small companies. Proven abilities to plan objectives, determine strategies and implement methods; staff (recruit, hire, train and mentor); direct; organize; coordinate; and evaluate business and IT policies, projects and procedures. Excellent interpersonal relations and abilities, including oral, written, and presentation skills needed to communicate with all levels of management, IT personnel, and clients. Author of many highly technical documents and numerous white papers.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Business process analysis and improvement, automation and computerization, and mentoring of staff.
- Multi-tenant Software as a Service (SaaS) architecture, development, delivery, support, and pricing.
- Copious open source software technologies and their advantages for startup companies.
- Railroading: Signal and Communications including Positive Train Control (PTC), Track, and On-Board.

MANAGEMENT & I.T. EXPERIENCE

Director, Software Solutions **2011 – now**

Invensys Rail North America Jacksonville, Florida

Over the years, Invensys Rail North America developed numerous software systems to support a variety of electronic rail products. This newly created role reports to the President of Invensys Rail North America and will consolidate the company's various legacy SaaS and back office systems into a P&L apart from the products business and will pursue opportunities to apply information technologies from a sister company (Invensys Operations Management) into North American freight and transit railroad markets.

Director, Continuous Improvement **2010 – 2011**

Invensys Rail North America, Research and Development Department Jacksonville, Florida

Evaluated Invensys Rail North America's R&D techniques, tools, processes and staff and provided actionable recommendations for both immediate and longer-term, on-going improvements.

Vice President, RailDOCS Solutions **2009 – 2010**

RMI, Engineering and Maintenance Division Jacksonville, Florida

Directed all business activities of this SaaS business with a 30+ person staff and over 5,000 users across 30+ customer accounts.

Vice President and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) **2002 - 2009**

10East Corporation Jacksonville, Florida

10East Corp. was formed in January, 2002, by Three Cities Research—a private equity firm—and management of The AIMS Group following TCR's purchase of ABC-NACO from bankruptcy; 10East was sold to RMI in April 2009.

Managed Software as a Service (SaaS) provider to the North American railroad industry, including all services marketed under the RailDOCS brand name that served over 5,000 users in half of the continent's Class 1 railroads, plus many regional and short-line railways.

Vice President and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) 1997 – 2001

The AIMS Group, a Subsidiary of ABC-NACO (NASDAQ: ABCR) Jacksonville, Florida
Predecessor to 10East Corp. and a wholly owned subsidiary of ABC-NACO.

- Managed all IT for ABC-NACO's Rail Systems Division (~350 employees in 11 locations).
- Also managed a for-profit subsidiary called The AIMS Group, Inc. and its RailDOCS-brand SaaS offering and served as its VP / CTO.

Vice President and Manager of Information and Communications Systems 1995 – 1997

United Railway Signal Group (URSG) Jacksonville, Florida

United Railway Signal Group was an independent signal design contractor to the North American railroad industry. I joined URSG's team in 1995 as the Manager of Information and Communication Systems and ultimately became a Vice President. During this time, the software as a service business that became known as RailDOCS was born. URSG was sold to ABC-NACO (NASDAQ:ABCR) in October of 1997.

Sole Proprietor 1995 – 1996

Computation Integration Technologies Tallahassee, Florida

Internet-related consulting and software development services provider to small- and mid-sized companies.

- Managed two employees providing connection of companies to the Internet for the first time.
- Migrated LANS from Banyan VINES, LANtastic, Netware IPX, etc. to TCP/IP, or overlaying TCP/IP.
- Installed routers, firewall, SMTP and POP/IMAP e-mail servers, web and FTP servers, etc.
- Closed company after accepting employment with URSG.

Lead Developer of the WANE Project (and other projects) 1990 – 1995

The Supercomputer Computations Research Institute (SCRI) Tallahassee, Florida

SCRI—initially federally funded supercomputer center—later became Florida State University's Department of Scientific Computing.

- Following several promotions, became the Lead Developer for the Wide Area Network Environment Project in which the fledgling and open-sourced Linux operating system was enhanced to support very large numbers of simultaneous users on commodity x86 hardware.

EDUCATION**Bachelor of Science: Economics 1992 – 1996**

Florida State University Tallahassee, Florida

REFERENCES

- Mr. Craig King, VP of Transportation - Northern Region, CSX Transportation, Jacksonville, FL
- Mr. Dennis Boll, Assistant VP of C&S (retired), BNSF Railway, Fort Worth, TX
- Mr. Mike Choat, President, Railroad Controls Limited, Benwood, TX
- Mr. Sid Bakker, President, Transportation Products Sales Company, O'Fallon, MO
(many more available upon request.)