



original equine image courtesy of Gail Guenther

creativity  
power speed  
intelligence

# Legendary Performance

By Jet Parker

**T**here is a story often told in boardrooms, a short narrative of mythical proportions...

*At the beginning of time, the sun was carried across the sky in a chariot pulled by twelve horses. One day, a passing comet startled the horses and they fell to the earth, scattering in four directions. Three went east and became great race horses; three went west to pull wagons and plows. Those that went north became fierce war horses, and the other three inspired drawings and dreams. The legend goes that whoever could harness all twelve horses again would inherit their greatest gifts: speed, power, intelligence and creativity.*

The tale could have been just a clever marketing ploy. In time, however, under the direction of CEO David LaPlante, Twelve Horses, a privately owned firm serving corporations across the globe, turned mythical fairytale into magical fact. How? They offer a web-based on demand messaging platform (MessageMaker™) that enables companies to automate and integrate multiple channels of communications ('modes') to their prospects, customers, partners and vendors.

Twelve Horses services its' growing global customer base with headquarters in Dublin, Ireland and Reno, Nevada. LaPlante notes, "We've realized a 212% growth rate in '04 over '03. I believe we'll see a minimum 400% growth rate this year."

Twelve Horses has seen much of their expansion from existing customers reinvesting in larger and more com-

plex solutions. "It's one thing to sell that first solution and gain a new customer," remarks David. "When the customer comes back and doubles or triples the investment in year two, that speaks volumes about the value."

If you ask LaPlante why they are so successful, he will say, "We practice what we preach." They do.

Case in point: About 35 minutes before my interview with David, I called my office (in Dallas) and asked an employee (Kevin Steckley) to go to the Twelve Horses web site and gather a few more details on the service portfolio of the firm. Kevin found a White Paper on their web site with the information I wanted. He relinquished some basic information about himself and our company to get access to the file. Then having done so, Kevin downloaded

the file, and called me with the information a few minutes later.

Within seconds, David LaPlante, (sitting in another meeting), received a text message that Kevin Steckley, of CEO IQ in Dallas, Texas, had accessed the Twelve Horses web site and downloaded a company White Paper. The MessageMaker™ cross-referenced Kevin's data against other Twelve Horses company systems, i.e., phone database, email, and so on. The result: LaPlante receives a text message on his cell phone that Kevin Steckley, of CEO IQ in Dallas, Texas just downloaded a company White Paper. This data is referenced against LaPlante's appointment database where the same company (CEO IQ) is listed as the firm that will be interviewing him thirty minutes later. – Noting that the interview will be with Jet Parker, President of CEO IQ.

Had I been a prospect, the search by Kevin on the Twelve Horses web site would have triggered a notice to a LaPlante sales staff person who would have known what data was browsed and/or downloaded. The point is that every time you touch the world of Twelve Horses, the team at Twelve Horses knows it, knows how to respond to it, and therefore knows how to optimize it. Further, not demonstrated in this scenario, is the ability of the Twelve Horses technology to push relevant messages to the end user in a way that secures their permission to receive the message (thus avoiding Spam filtering) and an invitation by the end user to dialogue about the message, thus creating a gateway for relationship-building. LaPlante



David LaPlante  
CEO, Twelve Horses

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Jet Parker  
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

## The Graying of America

The "Graying of America" is upon us. Over 12% of the population is over age 65 and that statistic is expected to nearly double by 2030.<sup>1</sup> Through the miracles of medical science, our average life expectancy has lengthened since the year 1900 by over 30 years to age 77. Unfortunately, the quality



of life for many aging Americans begins to deteriorate and, according to the 2003 America's Health Insurance Plans "Guide to Long Term Care," 40% of those over 65 will require a stay in a nursing home in their lifetime. This means that you, your parents and your employees are beginning to face some very difficult and costly decisions in unfamiliar territory. Additionally, your company will be impacted when a valued team member must address a long-term care crisis within their family. The reduced productivity of an employee dealing with this issue can be enormous.

Finding the right long-term care services for a loved one can be one of the most difficult situations that a family will ever face and triggers many daunting decisions. Determining the appropriate level of care and services required,

where the services should be delivered (in a facility or in the home) and how to pay a provider are only a few examples of the questions that must be answered by a family already struggling with the illness or diminishing independence of a beloved family member.

A new type of consultant, a geriatric care manager, is emerging who can provide families with the support and information they need to dramatically improve their decision-making ability. The geriatric care manager is an advocate of the aging client and his or her family and provides services for a fee paid by the family. A licensed social worker evaluates the senior client to assess his or her care needs and to ascertain the goals of both the client and the family. Findings, options and recommendations are documented in a *plan of care*, which is presented to the family.

The geriatric care manager then uses those criteria to narrow the search to a few potential appropriate providers. Due diligence on each provider is conducted and includes, among other things, state inspection reports, better business bureau information and a site visit. The short list and research is delivered to the client's family and, if desired, the social worker can lend further assistance by accompanying the family to facility visits or during caregiver interviews.

In our industry, we place a tremendous value on gathering information to support and validate our decision-making process. We now have the advantage of being able to enlist some of those same strategies in making better decisions for our family and providing valuable assistance to our employees. One company that applies this approach to provide a sound strategy for long-term care services is CompleteCare Planners.

For more information or a free consultation regarding your planning options, contact Edward Sanchez, Branch Director, CompleteCare Planners, Inc. at (214)987-2100 or by email at [esanchez@ccplanners.com](mailto:esanchez@ccplanners.com). You may also visit [www.completecareplanners.com](http://www.completecareplanners.com).

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<sup>1</sup> The Administration on Aging, US Department of Health and Human Services, 2001.

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...serve, not sell.

...teach, not tell.

...build relationships, not contacts.

As the nation's greatest field intelligences resource, we help help CEOs successfully progress through all seven stages of business development:

starting, surviving, building, refining, thriving, maturing and exiting.



To contact a CEO IQ talent trust member or inquire about another CEO IQ service, please call (214) 75-CEOIQ.

## Legendary Performance

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notes additional differentiators that Twelve Horses provides.

"MessageMaker™, our web-based system," begins LaPlante, "is easily installed, adapts to other business processes, automatically manages multiple modes of communication channels, generates viable compliance auditing trails, integrates into all departments, makes critical customer/prospect data mobile and tracks all transaction activity – all under one platform." He continued, "This helps companies design, deliver, analyze and automate electronic communications - including email, fax, web and SMS text messages - to personalize one-to-one communications, drive real-time responses to inquiries, notify internal staff of just-arrived web site visits, and provide virtual literature rack services."

### Twelve Horses' Legendary Results

- Red Herring [publications] used the process to increase subscribers to their online newsletter and ultimately subscribe to their magazine, producing more than a 500% growth in subscription base.
- Allied Machine increased their web site averages to improve trade show attendance. Following a MessageMaker-driven promotional message, the company realized 900 visits within 15 minutes (versus their average of 120 visits); re-

ceiving 3,900 visits by the end of the day.

- Golden Pages Ltd., in the directory business since 1968, used the platform to collect debt. The company, with over 45,434 advertisers and a circulation of 1,700,000 copies, had a debtor base of 229 companies accumulating more than €229,291 (\$303,053) over a seven-month period. Using Twelve Horses' services, Golden Pages collected 40% of this debt within two weeks, more than €91,600 (\$121,067) cash within three weeks, with an average transaction cost of 1,312% less than traditional human-based collection systems.

### Legendary Lessons

This is the power, speed, intelligence and creativity – the must-have tools – that will accelerate the performance of today's companies into tomorrow's legendary firms. If you're a little creeped-out about this 1984-esque scenario, don't be. Information is worthless (for growing the company) if you don't harness it, access it and then apply it to grow a personal relationship with the end user.

Companies complain that their customer relationship management (CRM) program isn't working effectively. In truth, the CRM program works fine. Companies simply need to use technology like MessageMaker™ to put customer/prospect data (trapped in CRM programs) to work.

Information, regardless of its entry point, will never bear fruit (new business) until all the electronic tools used to generate it - web, email, voice, fax, mobile text – are automated and integrated at lightning-speed so that service, sales, marketing and operations can effectively manage the entire prospect/customer life cycle. It is like having a company staffed with gatherers - trying to harvest a crop they failed to plant. It will be the undoing of lesser firms and prove a great opportunity for other enterprises - those that understand and use today's technology to push relevant messages to the end user in a way that secures their invitation to dialogue about business.

Any spin-doctor can write a great story. It takes a sound product/service structure that produces measurable business performance results to turn the story into a legend. David LaPlante and his Twelve Horses team managed to do both.

(CasestudiesaboutTwelveHorsescan be found by visiting their web site at [www.twelvehorses.com](http://www.twelvehorses.com).)

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