CloudAccess.net

Joomla! Platform-as-a-Service Community in the Cloud

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Starting a business from the ground up is no small task. While there can be many thrills, there are often just as many trials, and having the right kind of support can mean all the difference in the success of a business. Joining a community is often a great way to get this support. Sometimes, after contributing to and supporting a community, the effort can be reciprocated. This is exactly what happened to Gary Jay Brooks, founder and CEO of CloudAccess.net, a Joomla! Platform-as-a-Service company based in Traverse City Michigan. With the help of the entire Joomla! community, Brooks is developing one of Michigan's most innovative technology companies.

Gary Brooks has had a passion for technology since a young age. As a boy, he began tinkering and building computers in his basement with his father. Brooks explored various technologies in a variety of different industries, and eventually founded Northern Michigan Online, one of Northern Michigan's first dialup and broadband internet service providers. After selling the business a few years later, Brooks decided to start his own web design and consulting business called MichiganMedia.net. Looking for a solution to implement a large contract he had acquired, Brooks discovered Joomla!, one of the world's most popular content management systems used for designing web applications. He was hooked immediately. Brooks has since been an active member of the Joomla! community. He has contributed countless hours to community initiatives and events. During his involvement with Joomla!, Gary noticed that the system for launching demo trials of Joomla! could be improved, and it was not long before MichiganMedia.net made a proposal to host Joomla!'s demo site. Joomla! liked the idea to improve the free trial version, but Open Source Matters, the non profit organization behind Joomla!, made it clear that they would entertain proposals from any company interested. What Brooks didn't realize was that he would have to compete against large hosting companies like GoDaddy.com for the contract. Brooks' prior dedication and contributions to the Joomla! community helped him win the contract. After winning the contract, Brooks said, "people just really wanted something point-and-click and read-to-go." Gary changed the name of the company to CloudAccess.net and quickly began hosting over 1,000 new Joomla! website requests a day. The Joomla! community continues to support him as he develops one of Michigan's most innovative technology companies. In 2010, when Brooks needed advice on the business, he contacted Joe Batteiger, Finance and Strategy Specialist with the MI-SBTDC, through the local Chamber of Commerce. Batteiger started meeting regularly with Brooks and they discussed important aspects of management. "Joe is great," Brooks said. "He always asks how the business is running. He advised me to get a board of advisors. He even talks with some of the management inside the company. You can tell he really cares about our company."

CloudAccess.net continued their phenomenal growth through demo site launches, but also began taking on bigger clients. Over 10,000 businesses are now using CloudAccess.net services. Just recently,

the company was awarded a large contract with a Children's Hospital of Boston to host a social networking site for almost 30,000 people. Over 22,000 demo sites are launched every month on their Platform-as-a-Service, and they are quickly becoming recognized as a leader in cloud computing. Even with the success, Brooks continues to meet with Batteiger regularly. He acknowledges that there is one thing that he really appreciates: "He just listens and there is no cost for the services, so that is great. He has become an extension of our business that we couldn't afford otherwise." Batteiger applauds the efforts of the CloudAccess.net. "Gary and his team have done a great job of guiding their business through the challenges of start-up and growth," he said. "They are an inspiring, innovative company that has a lot of potential for future success. Our role as the SBTDC has been to help Gary balance his expansion of personnel resources against his availability of financial resources." While Brooks focuses on his long-range technology vision, Batteiger is supporting him in structuring his financial dashboard and cash flow reporting system to ensure he will always have the funds he needs to achieve the next stage of growth. Brooks added that "Joe's great discussions on financial analysis and management has really helped support us during this time of growth. His insight and explanation of financial information gives us a better opportunity to monitor our financial situation and quickly adapt to our changing business environment. It's the kind of insight we need in order to continue our innovative culture." CloudAccess.net shows no signs of slowing down. "We are expecting to double our sales this year and bring 2 new products to market," acknowledged Brooks, "but we don't want to leave our startup mode. Startup is a culture and we want to continue to be innovative." With all the success of the business, Brooks offers great advice for entrepreneurs: "Business is Iteration. When you make a decision, it's never going to be the perfect choice, so you always have to seek change and improvement. Business is a process of continual improvements."

Find out more information about CloudAccess.Net

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