



COFFEE WITH
CLOUDWERX
EPISODE 2: **PETER FISHMAN AND DAN SILBERMAN**

0:10:22

Betsy Reed

Well, nice to be with you guys. I'll briefly introduce who I am and why we're doing this, and then we'll dive in. I have some good questions based on what I saw in your LinkedIn profiles.

I'm Betsy Reed, CRO, and co-founder of CloudWerx. I formed the company about two and a half years ago with Jason Geis, our other co-founder, and CEO. Our mission was to be the best technical consulting firm focused on the Google Cloud platform. The goal is to deliver 11/10 experiences to our Google Cloud customers. We want to help you answer basic questions: Is your infrastructure set up properly? Can you scale? Are you cost-optimized? Are you secure? These things are essential to ensure that you're set up for success as you grow. I wanted to connect with the founders or leaders of our key accounts to understand your story, background, inception, and vision for the future and help support those growth goals. So that's the mission.

Let's dive in! I would love to get a quick intro from each of you. What are your roles in the organization as co-founders?

01:34:20

Peter Fishman

I am Peter Fishman. I go by 'Fish,' and I am the co-founder and CEO of the company.

01:42:24

Dan Silberman

Dan Silberman. I'm the co-founder and CTO. I go by Dan.

01:47:21

Betsy Reed

Mozart Data. Your mission is to make data accessible even if you're not a tech person or an engineer. Tell me more about that. Was there a moment when you said, "We see what's happening in the world - there's a problem or a gap, and we want to create a solution"?

02:09:11

Peter Fishman

Dan and I have worked in the data space for decades and have had long careers with many different stops. At each place, we implemented data stacks to make data effective at those companies. That data stack, for the most part, looks the same over and over again. We were bringing a similar set of tools to those companies. Sometimes we built and bought them, but ultimately, we wanted to make that stack available to a larger audience. Typically, to get up and running with your data infrastructure, you need to hire someone like Dan. Modern tooling has come so far in terms of empowering both technical and non-technical users, but the challenge of getting started persists. We wanted to solve that problem in the ecosystem.

03:13:20

Betsy Reed

Dan, do you have anything to add?

03:17:10

Dan Silberman

What Mozart does is somewhat analogous to what GCP did. Every year, technology builds on what people have made easy in previous years. Now we don't ever think about managing hardware. We're built on app engines, so we don't have to think about load balancing across different servers or other things like that. It's all been made easy.

We're basically trying to do the same for data. Managing a bunch of data warehouses, doing the database administration, and managing users; we want to make that easy. Then our customers can focus on the hard parts, which is figuring out how to get value out of their data.

04:06:18

Betsy Reed

Absolutely. Talk to me about the name "Mozart Data." Who came up with the idea, and what's behind it?

04:12:14

Peter Fishman

I'll take the first swing at this. I am the person that came up with the name. Dan and I had different perspectives at the time. We have been friends for over 20 years, but one of our bigger fights was trying to come up with the name.

We had names that were playing on different things. I was a big proponent of plays on pipelining, music, orchestration, harmony, symphony, and composing your tables - all the cliches and terrible puns. Ultimately won the argument.

04:49:11

Dan Silberman

Our actual production Google Cloud project was called "Mario Data," but we were worried about trademark issues. The name still exists in some of our code, but it's not our actual name.

05:03:06

Betsy Reed

How many employees do you guys have now?

05:05:23

Peter Fishman

We're 25 people.

05:07:07

Betsy Reed

Are you distributed? Fish, you're obviously at your office in San Francisco. Is that the hub where most people come in to work?

05:18:22

Peter Fishman

Ten of us are in the Bay Area. Dan's in Oakland. I'm in San Francisco. We have a hybrid approach. Most people work at home, but we have office spaces in San Francisco and Denver that people sometimes use.

05:36:14

Betsy Reed

Tell me about what makes you guys unique in this space. What do you believe Mozart Data brings to the table in terms of differentiators? What sets you apart?

05:51:03

Dan Silberman

The key is we try to make everything easier to use. Easier to use than any other tool that's ever been available before. One of our key design principles is smart defaults with flexibility. So we don't want to take any of the power away from doing it in a more hardcore way. But we make what you'll likely want to do (the default) really easy. Pete was describing the genesis of the company. We've built similar tools in companies before. Still, when you're doing that, you're building something for the five data analysts sitting next to you, so you can't invest in front-end engineers and designers to make things as easy to use as possible.

But now that we're building it for many companies, we can invest in that and have the interface feature dropdowns and buttons. We offer user-friendly tools rather than engineers having to write the YAML just so and have to get it exactly right, or it's going to fail to work.

06:54:15

Peter Fishman

Like many products, the unique value proposition is we solved a handful of specific problems, namely getting your data infrastructure. We solved it really, really well. We want teams to do what they're uniquely good at; to understand their business and derive insights about their business and not spend hours and hours and hours, if not weeks or months, trying to spin up the type of infrastructure that will support that.

07:28:06

Dan Silberman

One benefit that I don't think we foresaw at the beginning is that since we can now make this easier to do than ever before, it's opened it up to more people. Many of our customers don't even have 'data' in their name. We initially thought that our product was automating me for people like Pete, which is undoubtedly the case. But a lot of our customers are not data analysts or data scientists. They're just data-savvy growth people or marketing people or salespeople who now have access to the type of tools that you used to have to be a data engineer (or maybe a data analyst) to have access to.

08:08:04

Betsy Reed

That's great. And you know, in terms of that accessibility, you're really using software and technology for purposes that isn't just for the tech team. It puts it in the hands of other folks who can use it daily to make decisions and drive business. It elevates the entire organization that's using the product. When you engage with a customer and they present a challenge, is there any consultative aspect? Do you recommend how they would use the product and then offer some additional things they should be thinking about? Is there some digging that goes on regarding how they will leverage it to the fullest capacity or some of those additional data sources they may need to get access to get the full picture?

09:02:18

Dan Silberman

I would say 100%. I mean, for one, I think we are pretty honest as an organization. If it is not right for you, we'll say, "here's what we think you should do instead." We do generally lead by asking what the problems they're facing are. If they requested a demo for a data product, we want to know what they hope to get out of it. What are some questions that they want answered? We have a world-class team of analysts that make up our support team and sales team. We want to ensure that you succeed with the product because it's relatively complex.

We try to make everything easy to use, but we're still talking about data, and there are many different things you can do with it. We can help our customers succeed by first understanding the platform and what they can do with it.

10:25:13

Betsy Reed

That's excellent. I do think there's a balance between product and service and how much you do. But to the extent that you can support your customers, number one, and I agree from the out if you can help them to buy you correctly. And sometimes that answer is... "don't."

You'll win a referral for life! It's so much better than bringing a customer on board that uses the product and has a bad experience. So I'm very much in support of that and can align with that methodology. We're coming up on our last 5 minutes. I have some fun questions to ask that dig into your background.

First I want to know how you met. You've been friends and colleagues for 20 years, but how did you meet, and what was your first interaction?

11:15:21

Peter Fishman

Sure. So Dan and I met in college. Dan's best friend from high school was my college roommate. Dan came down to visit Duke, and we caught a basketball game together. Sadly, it was a Duke loss.

11:33:02

Betsy Reed

Awesome. Did you know from the beginning that there was something there? Did you feel a good energy like you could collaborate and create something great together? Or was it just a friendship at the beginning?

11:45:05

Peter Fishman

There was definitely no professional relationship.

11:48:07

Dan Silberman

I hope you don't mind me sharing this. The second day we hung out with each other was "Case Day" for Fish and some of his college buddies. That's where they each try to drink a full case of beer in a day. So I wasn't exactly thinking, "Oh, I need to start a business with this guy someday."

12:06:19

Betsy Reed

I love it. The last thing I really have to know about is Bacon Hot Sauce. What is Bacon Hot Sauce? Because those are two of my favorite things in the world. So tell me more about this company.

12:29:07

Dan Silberman

It's basically a business that we started 12 years ago now. Similar to how we came up with our data business, we brainstormed ideas to see the best one we could come up with. Bacon Hot Sauce was the best one at the time. It started as a hot sauce of the month subscription that didn't exist at the time. Now multiple billion-dollar companies do that. But we threw that out and pivoted to bacon-flavored and hot sauce.

12:58:18

Betsy Reed

Is it still in production? Is your Bacon Hot Sauce available? Where do I go to buy it?

13:04:17

Peter Fishman

Bacon Hot Sauce still available. It is still in production. Dan and I sold the company three months before starting Mozart Data.

13:12:11

Betsy Reed

Take my word for it, I'm going to buy some bacon-flavored hot sauce. I'm going to let you guys know about it. You may still benefit from it, but it's for my edification. If you say it's good, I have got to try it.

13:23:13

Peter Fishman

Much like how we advocate for Mozart data, we advocate for Bacon Hot Sauce solely the grounds that we think it's the right choice. We would tell you otherwise.

13:35:04

Betsy Reed

Got it. I love it. Well, you guys, this has been awesome. I appreciate you spending time sharing more about Mozart Data. You guys are super charismatic folks, and we love what you're doing. We love partnering with you. If anything else comes up in the meantime, feel free to reach out to me.

13:54:05

Dan Silberman

I appreciate it was fun.

13:55:21

Betsy Reed

Yes. Thanks. You guys have a good one!