

Highlights

Rapid Financial Results; Lasting Cultural Change

Tim Rettig started the business while he was still an engineering student at the University of Cincinnati. "That was a time when many companies didn't have computer networks yet," he says.

Rettig later sold the business to a larger company in 1996 – only to buy it back in 2007. At around that same time, he talked to his father, who had also run a software company that he sold to an ESOP. When Rettig asked his father what he would have done differently, he told his son that he wished he had done a better job at educating his employees about finances and about how the company made money. That gave Rettig a reason to go looking for a system that could help him accomplish that in his company – which eventually led him to the Great Game of Business.

Rettig says that it was seeing a keynote talk by Dave Van Belle of Van Belle Nurseries at the Gathering of Games that convinced him that he needed to play the game in his own business. "That was when the light bulb went off for me," says Rettig. "It was unbelievable to see how he got a group of people from all over the world speaking different languages to get involved in that business. I couldn't see why I couldn't get a bunch of tech guys to figure this out."

One of the first moves Rettig took in implementing the GGOB system was to play the dollar game with his staff, where he asked all of them to guess how many pennies of profit the firm earned from every dollar of revenue. The average answer came in at about 45 cents. The real figure: 5 cents. "That was a real eye opener for a lot of people," says Chad Adams, the Vice President of Business Development. "I think we even lost employees who thought we were making more money than we were. Opening the books helped us all get in this together."



Organizational Background

Intrust IT, which was founded in 1992, provides information technology support for small and medium-sized businesses that can't afford an IT department of their own. The firm boasts more than 100 customers, most of whom reside in the greater Cincinnati area.

"I feel like this experience of playing the Great Game of Business just makes me more accountable for the work that I do. After working for so many years in the same position, people like myself tend to get lazy or careless when it comes to details. But with being open with financials every week through forecasting and every month when we go over the prior month's actuals, I'm on top of it. I also enjoy the fact that just because we all have to be adults and be accountable for our part in the company, it doesn't mean we can't also have fun while doing it."

~ Sophack Chhay, Office Administrator

Playing the Game Together

Today, thanks to playing the Great Game of Business and practices like huddling and forecasting, the entire team is focused on cutting costs and finding ways to increase their margins. "It's so different now than the way it used to be, where I was the finance person asking why we were spending so much money," says Rebecca Moix, the Vice President of Finance.

Chad Adams, Vice President of Operations, admits he was skeptical that the Great Game would impact the employees at Intrust IT much. "I always thought they just wanted to put in their eight hours and go home," he says. "But I was pleasantly surprised. I was glad to be wrong."

He points to one example where he had a meeting with two engineers who argued against purchasing a new piece of equipment, because it would cost too much and they could make do with something they already had on hand.

Another area where the team has come together is how they have improved their forecasting abilities throughout the organization. Every Tuesday is now forecast day. "I was used to getting financial reports two weeks after the month closed," says Rettig. "I was always looking in the rear-view mirror. Now I get to see what it's going to look like, which gives us the ability to make adjustments if we need to."

Then there's the MiniGames. One game in particular – which was conducted over a full year with the goal of increasing recurring revenue, the company's critical number – came with a tantalizing prize. If the team reached their goal, the company would buy a lake house, and everyone in the company would have the opportunity to spend one week a year at it. Guess what happened? They beat the goal and the lake house was built in 2016.

"Forecasting is one of my favorite parts of the week because I want to beat my goal, I want to forecast correctly and have true numbers, and it's interesting to see how well everyone else does. Everyone gets excited when the numbers look good, and knows we have some work to do when they don't look the greatest. The GGOB just adds another element that makes this a great place at which to be employed."

~ Kyle Gibbons, Dispatcher

What's Next?

Beyond elevating their game play as a team, one big move that Rettig has plans for is transitioning his business into an ESOP by 2020.