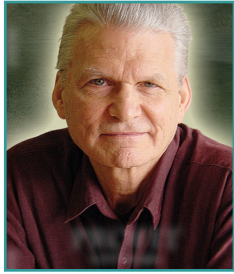




TECH STAR



## Art Pennington: Perfecting the Design of Software

[By Akbar Ali]

Art Pennington is a man of many talents: president of the Profit Research Institute, creator of the Profit Method, author, speaker, patent-holder, and founder of four (yes, four) software companies whose profits have totaled in the millions. He has spent much of the last 40 years testing, studying, and perfecting technology, implementing new strategies and products which have revolutionized both the technical and business aspects of the technology industry, ensuring that his influence will last for many years to come.

Art graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1967 with a B.S. in mathematics. Like most others at the time, computers were little understood and held virtually no sway over the public consciousness. Business applications were just beginning to become somewhat advanced (though still primitive by modern standards), and outside the scientific arena, there was no such thing as formal training for programmers.

Business computers had started to appear in companies like General Electric. These companies, in turn, needed to hire programmers to advance the development of business solutions. The caveat? There were no programmers back then, and short of hiring someone with a broadly technological background and, in essence, throwing them to the wolves, there was no clear, defined effort to produce viable software.

Because the technology industry was in such a fluid state at its inception, few companies had any idea of how to recruit and develop technological professionals. General Electric, one of the largest national companies at the time, discovered that the best approach was simply to hire new graduates who had to teach themselves how to write programs; anyone with a degree was given this opportunity, given that they passed an in-house programming aptitude test.

Art applied and took the test. Not only did he pass, he was informed that he had achieved

**Q. What do you do for fun?**

**A.** I love to do "Rubber Room" meetings with CEOs. Just get out of reality and into an imaginary world where anything is possible. If you can see it, you can build it. My customers and I have made many wonderful discoveries, which have even lead to several patents.

**Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?**

**A.** *From Good to Great* by Patricia Fripp

**Q. What is the last magazine you read?**

**A.** *MacWorld*

**Q. What is your favorite TV show?**

**A.** Reruns of *The Andy Griffith Show*

**Q. Who is your role model?**

**A.** *Thomas Edison*

**Q. What makes you laugh?**

**A.** Each time I realize I've been really stupid.

the highest score of anyone who had ever taken the exam. Unfortunately, his success as a first wave programmer was short lived. "I felt great about that until a year later when I was fired for non-performance. I was young, brash, and assumed they were just screwed up," he says.

He moved on to a programming position at Cincinnati Milacron, a manufacturer of machine tools. His time there was barely an improvement over his last job.

"I didn't get fired, but I didn't fare much better. It was awful, he says. Huge programs, written by others, full of undocumented spaghetti code, to commit to memory and become an expert in, so that changes could be made. I didn't want to change them. I wanted to rewrite them. They were a mess. But that wasn't the way things were done. The bosses said, 'They're already written; just make them work and keep them working.'"

What became apparent to Art was that the budding IT business needed some revamping — *major* revamping. The system was bogged down by what he referred to as "incredible waste, inefficiency, and failure." Regardless of the intelligence and diligence of the IT professionals, they could not overcome a process which was set up to destroy their work. The situation was more than he could abide.



TECH STAR

"It drove me crazy, and I quit," Art says. I was 25, married with two little kids. I had enough money in the bank for a month or two. That wasn't smart, but have you ever been so frustrated you just couldn't survive the insanity? I had to leave."

It had been three years since Art had graduated, and in the meantime, minicomputers had started to appear on the market. Coupled with his frustration at the way bigger organizations seemed intent on sabotaging his work, he decided to begin his own software company.

His intentions were clear from the get-go. "I wanted my customers to have not just what they asked for, but everything they could even imagine would help their business, delivered on time, every time, for a fraction of the cost, with no risk. Still today, that's a pretty revolutionary idea," he affirms.

Aside from his developing technological expertise, he ensures that his business was customer-oriented, which helped propel him to his first real success.

"Up front, even before discussing requirements, I offered my customers a guaranteed fixed price, with no payment until they were happy with the final completed solution. Clients were begging to get on my schedule," he recalls.

Working on his own and encouraged by the success of his independent vision, Art was

able to unlock the secret to undoing the damage he had witnessed early in his career: "I learned to design solutions [I knew], up front, would transform the customer's business, enable them to stomp their competition, and deliver them for one-tenth of the cost."

Since that time, Art has never looked back, and has been developing software at a dramatically lower cost by doing away with the wonton excess that hampered nearly 40 years of software design.

He asserts, "The cost of software development has only one dimension: labor. Anything that reduces labor reduces cost, timeframe, and risk all at the same time. I arrived at 10 fundamental development principles that combine to cut the cost of development to one-tenth of normal [development costs] — principles that will never change."

"I have perfected this process for 37 years through four successful software companies and many satisfied customers, he adds. "The process is very different from the traditional IT process, but it works. All projects are delivered complete, on time, every time and at a small fraction of normal cost."

In 1999, he sold his last software company, Trimark Technologies, to PeopleSoft, and has made it a personal goal of his to spread the word on the revolutionary method he developed over the years which he now calls

the *Profit Method*. It is currently available in eBook form as a free download at [www.profitmethod.com](http://www.profitmethod.com)

"The *Profit Method* is not theory," Art avows. "It is a proven process that has worked for decades. The eBook contains many real life examples of how to achieve phenomenal success."

This tried-and-tested method holds all the essential lessons he believes are vital to the careers of those just starting out in the tech industry. "It distills all of the important lessons I have learned over the past 40 years into a cohesive simple prescription for success in any corporate software project. It is a repeatable blueprint for achieving astounding results."

He also notes that, "there are very few CIOs who have ever become CEOs because, as the Gartner Group and the Standish Group both point out, they don't deliver results. When you deliver results, you get promoted. The *Profit Method* explains, in language anyone can understand, precisely how to get those results. I have personally made millions just by doing what is in the book. It's not obvious, but it is simple. Anyone can do this because it's not about technology. It's about results."

**ON THE NET**

Profit Research Institute  
[www.profitmethod.com](http://www.profitmethod.com)

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.