



TECH STAR



Tim Roddy: Secure Computing Corp.'s Technology Marketing Star

[By Akbar Ali]

As director of product marketing for Secure Computing Corporation, Tim Roddy is charged with the unique task of marketing to the technology industry and its customers what is widely considered the “gold standard” of Enterprise firewall technology. With a customer base of more than 19,000, Roddy helps Secure Computing Corp. promulgate its leadership status in the field of research and development of network and systems security technology. Roddy is also one of the industry’s foremost experts on technology marketing, emphasizing client understanding as much as he does product knowledge.

Roddy’s entry into the technology industry was unconventional in that, though he was always interested in the field, he initially elected to pursue a separate (though related) line of work: engineering.

“I have always been fascinated by technology. I was a good student in science and math, so I majored in engineering. Working as an engineer, I was more interested in the business side and ended up leaving my job to pursue an MBA. I’ve been in product marketing ever since.”

He adds that his primary reason for transitioning from engineering into technology marketing was his abiding interest in not only the facility of operations created by technology, but in understanding how and why it is able to work.

“I always enjoyed technology and learning about how things work. Technology product marketing allows me to continue to do that.”

An accomplished student, Roddy attended two of the nation’s best schools in engineering and business administration, simultaneously allowing him to develop disciplinary know-how and professional skill.

“I have an MBA from the Anderson School at UCLA, and bachelor’s and master’s degrees in mechanical engineering from UC Berkeley. Attending UC Berkeley was one of the most enjoyable and challenging experiences of my

life. It challenged me to stretch my abilities and grow as a person.”

While at Berkeley, he honed his leadership skills by serving as treasurer of the College of Engineering’s Student Association. He transitioned into the engineering industry by working as a mechanical engineer for an aerospace firm where he worked on computer modeling of spacecraft thermal performance.

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Golf, home improvements, staying involved in my kid’s activities.

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

A. *Fantasies and Delusions* by William Joel.

Q. What is the last magazine you read?

A. *First Things*.

Q. What is your favorite TV show?

A. *24*.

Q. Who is your role model?

A. Pope Benedict XVI.

Q. What makes you laugh?

A. Satire.

After working for several years in the industry, Roddy realized that his professional ambitions had changed, prompting him to return to school.

“After four years of work experience in aerospace, I left to attend business school full time and earn my MBA from UCLA. I have been working in high technology marketing ever since. Product marketing at Secure Computing was a natural progression of increasing responsibility for me.”

Since joining Secure Computing, he has helped move the company to a much broader client base, attracting customers from all types of industries and helping propel the company’s fiscal revenues well into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

“My most notable career accomplishment at Secure Computing Corp. is the positioning and marketing of our technology solutions since I arrived. This has been a tremendous challenge, but also rewarding and successful as measured by sales success and industry analyst recognition.”

But in addition to his accomplishments, Roddy has picked up some important lessons along the way, the most important being the often undervalued skill of observing instead of doing.

“The most important lesson I learned in business is to listen. Since those around you



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collectively know more than you do, listening will help you continue to learn. This makes you a more valued member of the business team.”

Being a member of high-profile business teams also brings with it other rewards, including the advice and wisdom of others, which, when channeled correctly, can lead to career breakthroughs. Roddy himself has benefited from the experience of others around him who have shown him the best way to move forward in the business world.

“One of the first sales vice presidents I worked for taught me the importance of building relationships with colleagues and partners. It is through these relationships that success is achieved. As you move from role to role and firm to firm, you can leverage these relationships for future success.”

For those just starting out in the specialized field of technology marketing, Roddy recommends that they broaden their knowledge base as much as possible, understanding that their ability to market

is only as good as their understanding of what they are trying to position as the new standard in technology.

“Technology marketers need to be well versed in their industry and technologies; that means consistently reading to educate yourself. Technology marketers also need to understand their products and be able to demonstrate them. This way, they can listen to their prospects and better position products, tailoring them to the prospects’ needs.”

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