



Straight to **THE SOURCE**

By Jessica Chapman

LANCE WALTER, V.P. OF MARKETING FOR PENTAHO

» You might run into Lance Walter and his family strolling around Lake Eola in downtown Orlando, enjoying a quaint Italian restaurant in trendy Thornton Park, or at one of this new Central Floridian's other favorite places. Lance grew up in the original capital of computer commerce, Silicon Valley, and spent his first dozen years as a professional working there in the \$12 billion business intelligence market. In 2005 a start-up company specializing in open-source business software lured Lance to Orlando with a position as its vice president of marketing. That company, Pentaho (pen-TAH-ho), is based on the notion that software and source code should be available without charging licensing fees. Anyone can download Pentaho's products and start using them immediately. The company's business model is based on delivering value-added support and services to these users. With a great strategy, an experienced team and a customer-friendly business model, Pentaho is poised to revolutionize the software industry.



PHOTOS BY PHELAN EBENHACK

T Texture: How does Pentaho differ from other software companies?

lw Lance Walter: Pentaho is taking a unique approach that's designed to deliver better products, better services and better value than the traditional proprietary software model. We make our software and source code freely available, which allows developers around the world to contribute functionality or bug fixes. It's loosely analogous to people sharing and contributing videos to YouTube.

T What are some examples of open-source software?

lw TiVo runs an open-source operating system called Linux, and more and more mobile phones are delivered with this operating system. Popular Web sites like Craig's List, Google, Yahoo, YouTube and MySpace all use significant amounts of open-source software.

T Were you familiar with Orlando before you moved here?

lw I had been to Orlando for professional conferences and vacations, but neither gives you a feel for what it's like to live here. When my wife and I came to visit and spent time downtown, we realized what a nice place it would be to live. It has Italian restaurants, sushi bars, pubs, beautiful parks, Lake Eola and the amphitheater, and so much more. We're still finding great new places.

T How do the office environment and workforce in Central Florida compare to those of Silicon Valley?

lw What's similar is that you have very experienced professionals working very hard, with an incredible rate of technological innovation. But the overall attitude here is more laid-back and not as self-serious as Silicon Valley.

T What are the challenges of your job?

lw Keeping up with demand is our biggest challenge right now. The pace is so much faster than any I've seen in a proprietary model. We all joined Pentaho because we thought we could change the market by offering customers a better model for business intelligence. We were right, but keeping up with all the interest is demanding. We've grown the team here in Orlando a lot to make sure we can keep up.

T What type of clients do you have?

lw We have clients all over the world. Some are large companies like Motorola, Terra Industries and Unionfidi S.C. in Italy, while others are smaller, like Boyne Resorts USA and DivX. It seems like a lot of "Web 2.0" companies are using our soft Web sites in the United States.

T Having spent so many years in Silicon Valley, do you feel removed from the software industry here?

lw I was surprised by how easy it is for our company, and for me personally, to stay "plugged in" to the professional high tech network. High tech companies have popped up in many places, so Silicon Valley isn't the same epicenter of the industry that it used to be. Plus, Orlando has become a hub for conferences and trade shows because it's so well equipped in terms of facilities and lodging. Orlando hosts more high tech conferences than any other city that I know, so it's a great place to stay plugged in to other colleagues.

T What does the future hold for Pentaho?

lw We've grown very fast since I joined the company in 2005. We win customers away from our proprietary competitors on a daily basis, and there's no reason why we can't capture a significant portion of the \$12 billion business intelligence market. We've got better products, better service and a better business model for customers, and we're going to use that model to turn a \$12 billion market on its head.

T Are you happy with your decision to leave a high-profile company for a new life in Central Florida and a position with a start up?

lw I'm very happy. My wife, our daughters (one of whom was born in Orlando), and I are all really enjoying Central Florida. Career-wise, I left a VP job at a billion-dollar software company and haven't looked back. Pentaho is doing better than I had expected, and has turned into the best professional opportunity that I've ever had. **x**