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# INTRODUCTION

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Imagine the setting: the heartland of America in the year 2000. One of the first Internet-based companies lands in Omaha, Nebraska. Its mysterious name is X.com.

I was ready for a new career after spending 7 years as a household engineer for my family. The ad for X.com tempted me with stock options and fabulous benefits. The principals from the California-based company were conducting interviews in hotel rooms. The actual site for the business was yet to be located and offices furnished.

They offered me a job. I accepted. It was a bold career move into unfamiliar territory. But I have never looked back except to say thank you.



What on earth is X.com? Needless to say, my relatives wondered too. They were skeptical that this was a “front” for an adult Web site. With a name like X.com, I can’t blame them.

I was promoted to the first management slot within forty-eight hours with X.com. And I went from being interviewed to conducting the interviews within my first week. We were making up the rules as we went along and flying by the seat of our pants. It was a wild ride indeed.

I helped to hire the initial teams that now support one of the premier employers in the Omaha market with a name known around the world: PayPal. Little did I know that I was making dot.com history.

The company migrated from X.com to the now familiar name of PayPal later in 2000 and went public in early 2002 only to be purchased by eBay in July of the same year.

I had done everything from conducting interviews on the front lawn of their first offices (because the carpenters were still hammering and the painters painting) to participating in the ground breaking for their current office on the PayPal campus in southwest Omaha.



I couldn't have predicted that my next big opportunity would place me squarely in the center of another dot.com revolution: social marketing. I literally started, staffed, and unlocked the door to the customer service center for LinkedIn in Omaha in late 2006. Today the office supports over 41 million LinkedIn users worldwide.

I have developed and cultivated numerous departments from the ground up. Along the way I have had the great pleasure (and even greater challenge) of cultivating strong teams, vibrant corporate cultures, and flawless performance standards. I have been a mentor and leader to hundreds of professionals.

One quality has been woven into everything I have done throughout my career: gratitude. Much of my career success is due to gratitude. Gratitude that I have shown to my colleagues, and gratitude that has been given to me. I look at gratitude as the hallmark of my professional life. And thus the theme of this book.

I hope to spark all of you who read this book or hear my talks about gratitude in leadership to focus more attention in this area. Perhaps you will take some of my ideas back to your workplaces.



I also hope you will spread gratitude into your communities. I happily and eagerly serve on boards for nonprofit organizations and other civic groups. Volunteerism is part of being a good corporate citizen and helps to foster the sense of gratitude you will read more about in *Gratitude at Work*.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to tell you about it.