

Mantissa Group News

The CIO Agenda

Mantissa's belief that *success lies at the intersection of strategy, leadership, and research.*

.....From the Desk

2020 has started off “normally” and evolved into a crisis mode. From all accounts, we are pleased to acknowledge that most technology organizations have responded admirably. This response was not an accident, but rather years of planning, disaster recovery exercises, and technology advancements in remote working. A reflection point from one of our CIO conversations noted that “this COVID emergency has put the technology organization front and center. Our success in managing technology is a primary enabler for our company response”. Reflections from our CIO clients also indicate that return to work will be far from normal with the final story yet to be written.

This edition of **Mantissa Group News** will not be singularly focused on the COVID response and implications. Many articles, blogs, and reports are commenting on this in a plentiful way. Our edition will focus on the CIO agenda in a prospective way. CIO **leadership** will be the focus of this edition and we are pleased to showcase a Mantissa Group partner, **Raoul Buron** of Ingenium Leadership. We will discuss why the CIO transformation agenda cannot be accomplished without an equally robust CIO leadership agenda.

Finally, our report will follow up on items noted in our first quarter newsletter, transactions in the industry, and

This COVID emergency has put the technology organization front and center. Our success in managing technology is a primary enabler for our company response

- CIO Fortune 500 Company (Manufacturing)

Company News



Mantissa is pleased to announce the growth of our executive team with the addition of **Sean McCarthy** to the firm. Sean is an Insurance industry veteran and joins us as Senior Vice President and Client Partner. Sean is a seasoned

insurance industry executive with deep experience in professional services sales, delivery and client engagement. Sean joins Mantissa and is charged with leading company growth. We are pleased to welcome such a talented leader!

Final Thoughts – Our Reading List

Some recommendations for your 2020 reading list:

1. Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead
 - Nell Scovell and Sheryl Sandberg
2. EDGE: Value-Driven Digital Transformation
 - David Robinson, Jim Highsmith, and Linda Lu

We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

Let Leaders Lead

Mantissa believes that CIO's and leaders are born during difficult times like the recent COVID period we are experiencing. However, leadership does not just happen in the moment – it takes focus, philosophical clarity, and active engagement among the CIO and teams well in advance. It is why we believe so strongly that technology strategy and leadership growth must be developed simultaneously.

We came across an article, **Soledad O'Brien: Give People a Chance to Lead** in a Crisis, Mar 31, by Stephanie Buscemi, indicating that “ In times of unprecedented crisis, like the one we are living in, there are opportunities for true leaders to rise to the occasion”. The article was based on conversation with Soledad O'Brien, the award-winning journalist who has chronicled more than her fair share of seismic global events over the course of her career.

Soledad goes on to say that “Every disaster I've covered — the tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, Haiti earthquake — these are opportunities where I've seen leaders emerge,” and goes on to say "In a crisis ... how do you support those people who are stressed ... and how do you give people a chance to lead?"

This is a critical test of true leaders. Certainly, there are times of command and control leadership, however this is the time to also empower those rising leaders who have creative ideas and may come up with different approaches to solving problems. All of this is predicated on building leadership **trust** and **strength** well in advance.

The Digital Enterprise

There have been many articles written about companies “going Digital”. However, the definition of digital is often vague or has different meanings depending on their interpretation of what it means to be a digital enterprise. For many executives, it is about a technology solution set, but for others (such as distribution channels), digital is a new way of engaging with customers. We believe that companies who pursue digital channels are looking for more modern ways of changing their business model. For executives, both technology and business, it is important to be unified on what digital means, the objectives of a unified digital strategy, and impact to the existing business model.

We will be introducing a 5-part series beginning in May, looking at the digital enterprise from different perspectives: definition of Digital, the Consumer Perspective, the Agent Perspective, Digital Ecosystem, and what we call, The Digital Touch.

Follow up on Penn River

The last published newsletter highlighted an interview with David Shaw, Co-CEO and Founder of Penn River software. Mantissa followed up on the interview with an in-depth research report co-authored with our colleagues from NEOS consulting. The full report is available on our website for your review and consumption. We believe you will be pleased with the depth of information.

Who is Ingenium Leadership?

Ingenium Leadership is a firm founded by Raoul Buron and an especially important strategic partner of Mantissa Group. According to Raoul, Ingenium is the Latin word for “talent”. Following is a spotlight on Raoul Buron and his firm.



MANTISSA SPOTLIGHT: INGENIUM LEADERSHIP

Our interview with RAOUL BURON, Founder and CEO of Ingenium Leadership

Our company philosophy at Mantissa is that *success lies at the intersection of strategy, leadership, and research*. Raoul Buron runs a firm with a sole focus on leadership development and a strategic partner that we draw on when needed. Raoul has spent an entire career in leadership development and has built an extraordinarily successful firm. **See Profile:** [Ingenium Company Profile](#)

We find Raoul's story to be powerful and wanted to share with our CIO audience and leaders.

Mantissa: Can you tell us about your background?

Buron: My career started at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. There I took a degree in psychology and in the process, fell in love with the science of people. I then flew airplanes in Europe for the Air Force for about 10 years. I attended University of Southern California where I took my doctorate in psychology. I was then sent back to the Air Force Academy as a teacher and psychologist and taught on the faculty within the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership. I loved this work and eventually formed a Leadership Development Center at the Academy and worked with some of the most talented young people our nation has. I retired from the Air Force in 1995. From that point on, my path forward was noticeably clear.

Mantissa: Why did you start Ingenium Leadership?

Buron: I always knew I wanted to start my own firm as my career evolved. I decided to work on both sides of

leadership - I liked working with a consulting company and being on the consulting side of the table. However, I also equally enjoyed being on the inside of a company for many years working with consultants in my role as chief learning officer. I ultimately decided to put my experience to use and get back into the science, so I founded Ingenium Leadership.

Mantissa: Why "Ingenium" Leadership?

Buron: Ingenium is a Latin word for "talent" (Mantissa fact-checked this definition!). We recognized that a huge amount of potential is not fully realized/actualized by leaders, and I wanted to be a part of building high performing leaders and leadership teams.

Mantissa: What has changed in leadership development over the years?

Buron: Teams, and how we get more out of teams. Generational differences have in many respects forced leadership to evolve (e.g. baby boomers vs Generation X, vs Generation Y). The generations have different value sets, and leaders need to account for that. Also, understanding how people in these generations learn has evolved. All of this is important in managing multi-generational teams. I find leaders to be more malleable today because of the appreciation for the *individual*, and they are better at understanding and adjusting to *situational leadership*.

Mantissa: Is the CIO or Technology Leadership different?

Buron: Not so much so in terms of basic leadership. However, if you are going to coach a technology executive, it is important to understand the context of the technology discipline (e.g. domain expertise) and the people you are working with. The CIO must also



appreciate that *what got you to the leadership role is not the skill that is needed to be successful as an executive*. We have not really taught them much about leadership.

Also, developing the skill of how to influence without formal control or power – we reward and promote people who *get things done*, however the CIO will then need to transition into leading by *influence*. “referent” power vs formal power is the transition point that is essential in CIO leadership development (**referent power** is a form of reverence or credibility gained by a leader who has strong interpersonal relationship skills).

For technology teams and rising leaders – the critical transition point is not having to be the technical expert but developing an ability to ask the right questions.

Finally, CIO’s need to understand the lifecycle of the team as they transition into higher and higher functioning. Understanding the difference between working group and team where people are interdependent on each other is the goal.

Mantissa: What lessons can you share to CIO’s?

Buron: Develop an executive presence, have a vision, develop relationships – *act and think like a businessperson vs a persona that focuses on the science of technology*. Look at the bigger picture and how your discipline applies or fits into the business.

Also, IT needs to catch up with the rest of the world as it pertains to women in leadership. We need to encourage more women to engage in the profession.

Mantissa: What do you do for fun?

Buron: Read, spend time with my family, and we love to snow ski! We at Mantissa thought he would say, “flying airplanes”.

Are you a new CIO?

If you find yourself in a **new CIO role** (6 months or less), or in a role with a **new mandate**, we strongly encourage you to articulate your vision through a formal 100-day report process.

Why is this so strongly encouraged? New CIO’s (or CIO’s with a new mandate) are normally hired for many reasons, such as setting a new organizational direction. However, it is very easy for a CIO to fall into a predictable trap: production problems, sales calls, contract issues, and human resource matters. Issues immediately pile up and the CIO becomes distracted.

Then 6 months pass, and business leaders ask the inevitable question: What exactly has changed? The 100-day report is your mechanism that allows you to hyper focus on your vision and strategic intent. During this time: **1. Expectations are established, 2. Branding opportunities are set, 3. Leadership is evaluated over time, and 4. The CIO is given a mandate.**

The tenure of a successful CIO is inevitably set during the first 6 months. A formal 100-day report will set the tone, not only for the IT organization, but also for the business leaders. We encourage you to find a good partner to work with; to organize *your* thoughts in a way that is consumable by business executives as well as your own technology organization.



In the News

Several interesting transactions have occurred in the first quarter of 2020 in the Life and Annuities business, as well as emergence of Insurance Fintech.

Brewer Lane Ventures investment in Socotra, a San Francisco-based company with a cloud-native core policy administration platform. \$15.2 million in a Series B funding round was led by Brewer Lane with participation from Portag3 Ventures, 8VC, and MS&AD Ventures.

See article: [Brewer Lane Venture invest in Socotra](#)

Salesforce buys Velocity for \$1.3bn in industry cloud takeover solidifies Salesforce in the insurance industry vertical.

See article: [Salesforce Acquires Vlocity for 1.3B](#)

We believe that transactions like these continue to breed substantial confidence in the insurance software industry, as well as confidence in FinTech's. We also believe that transactions like this will continue to define our year in 2020, despite the uncertain COVID times we live in.

Concluding Thoughts

Mantissa Group defines itself as the support system for CIO's and their leadership teams, regardless of industry. Our newsletters will continue to showcase companies and CEO's who lead them, as well as discussing emerging technical and technology matters.

Wishing you a healthy and successful 2020



Don Desiderato is a former Fortune 100 CIO executive and founder of Mantissa Group LLC, a strategy consulting firm serving the CIO executive and their extended leadership teams. He is a deeply experienced senior technology executive helping leaders with their **technology strategic plans**, as well as simultaneously focusing on **leadership development and culture**.

Mantissa Group provides strategic business and technology consulting services. We support the Chief Information Officer (CIO) executive with a broad range of knowledge across industries. The mission of Mantissa is to serve business and technology executives and leadership teams.

Mantissa's highly integrated services leverage targeted research, strategic consulting, and executive and leadership coaching.

Website: [http:// www.mantissagroup.com](http://www.mantissagroup.com) contact us at: info@mantissagroup.com