

# A look to the future

How to take advantage of less expensive technology **Interviewed by Chelan David**

**M**ore than 40 years ago, Intel founder Gordon Moore famously predicted that the number of transistors on a chip would double every two years. Known as Moore's Law, this observation has helped to fuel a technology revolution. Certainly, the computer age has transformed the way that we do business. And for the foreseeable future, rapid technological improvements will continue at a blistering pace.

"New technology translates to productivity," says Hormazd Dalal, president of Castellán Inc. "Productivity translates to one of two things — an increase in revenue with the same operating costs, lower operating costs or both."

*Smart Business* spoke with Dalal about why the costs associated with new technologies are shrinking, which ones are most important for business owners to take advantage of and what advancements he envisions in the future.

## Why is investing in new technologies so crucial?

There are two types of new technology. One is advancements and improvements to existing technology, which typically bring more stability and security to an existing product.

The other is a new product which will enhance productivity. A good example of this is the advent of Adobe PDF. Today, information travels faster because of the ability to scan documents, e-mail them to someone's desk, work with the documents digitally and then send them back. Transactions now take place electronically.

## How affordable is new technology?

It's becoming more and more affordable. Ten years ago, the ability to digitally read a document was only available to the largest companies. Today, you can go to your neighborhood store and buy software that is able to optically read your documents. There is even dictation or voice recognition software available now. These are technologies that required a lot of processing power and million dollar computers in the past, but are now available on PCs.



**Hormazd Dalal**  
President  
Castellán Inc.

## What technologies are most beneficial for business owners to use?

Technologies that will speed up the processes and make them more cost-efficient. An example would be a customer that is processing insurance claims and receives these claims by paper. If the insurance company has the ability to send them electronically, not only is it more cost-effective for the insurance company, but the volume of claims that the processing company can handle can double with the same amount of resources. I refer to that as Electronic Data Interchange, or EDI.

## How can remote access capabilities help improve productivity?

Remote access creates tremendous efficiencies. You should no longer be tied down to your desk in order to work. Let's say that you go out to lunch and, upon returning to the office, you have five phone calls that you have to return, a task that could take 30 to 45 minutes. If you had the technology that allows you to take those calls while you were out, you could have handled each of those calls on the spot.

## How do you apply technology to track prospects and customers?

The buzzword is 'customer relationship management' or CRM software. Six to seven years ago, only the biggest companies developed this software. Today, it is available to small businesses through desktop applications like ACT and GoldMine all the way up to Oracle and Microsoft CRM products.

CRM software enables you to pull all customer information and correspondence immediately. If a customer calls you, you can pull up the last person that worked with him or her and all of the notes that are in the system.

## What types of new technologies do you envision in the future that will increase business productivity?

Any technology that enables and facilitates communication and collaboration with your coworkers, customers and vendors will be an area of growth.

An example of a collaboration tool is the ability to schedule an appointment, which is currently available in most messaging applications. Rather than just entering a date into your calendar, you can check the availability of coworkers and have an acceptance automatically enter an entry into your calendar. The next suite of applications for Microsoft will concentrate more on collaboration and will allow multiple people to work on the same document quickly rather than having them print it out, revise and send. This type of technology is already out there. The one difference is that, as time goes on, it will become less cumbersome and easier to use.

The end of the year will bring a major shift in computing capabilities. Microsoft's long-awaited Vista operating system will be released along with new versions of Exchange and Office. These new products will all support 64-bit processors, which will be readily available by mid-2007 and mainstream by mid-2008. This shift will be similar to the advent of the GUI (Graphical User Interface) from DOS.

**HORMAZD DALAL** is president of Castellán Inc. Reach him at (818) 789-0088, ext. 202, or hormazd@castellan.net.

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