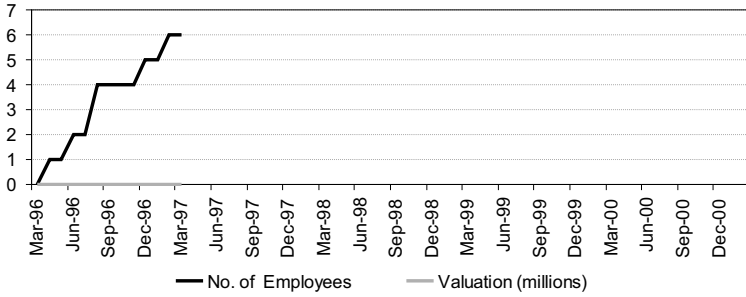


March 1997



Word of Mouth



We hadn't really expected to be in the business of helping to ease the discomfort of rats, but once things got going, there was really no way of knowing where they might lead.

In 1996, at the request of the local Varian salesman, I had traveled to Australia to show off the software Jeff and I had written. One of the venues I had gone to was a prestigious teaching hospital. Around a conference room table, I had presented our software to a group of thoughtful medical physicists who spent their lives exploring things I couldn't understand. Sitting there, viewing my demonstration of what would become the foundation of the Neoforma software, they had conveyed a surprisingly energetic curiosity.

An eager man in a lab coat interrupted my demonstration to tell a colleague enthusiastically that he had been able to get the specifications for a certain piece of radiotherapy equipment made in the U.S. He was thrilled that he had been able to get this information from across the world while the manufacturers slept. And he was most thrilled that he had been able to get it *in a couple of hours*.

He had searched many different websites to locate the correct manufacturer. Then he had searched for some time within that manufacturer's site. But he eventually found what he was looking for much faster than the current method of spending hours calling colleagues to locate a fax number, sending a fax and then waiting until those lazy Americans got out of bed.

I asked him what the product was. By a lucky coincidence, I had that particular product catalogued in our software. In seconds I was able to pull up the same information he had in his hands. They liked that idea and would soon join the thousands of visitors to our website.

After being with us for only a few months, our very talented website