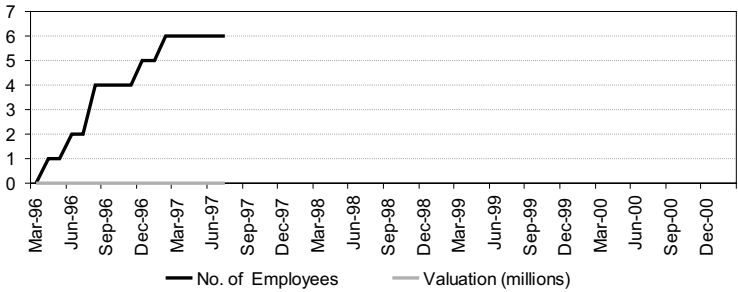


July 1997



A Square Peg



Being unique is great. Except when you're not like everyone else.

Even when it was looking likely that angels like Shawn and Wally would fund us, Jack insisted that we keep exploring other paths. He said he knew consultants who specialized in helping small companies get big funding. And then there were also the venture capitalists (VCs).

We had revenue, increasing website traffic, a patent application filed for our planning and email systems, and respectable angel investors about to put money in us. It was time to figure out what we wanted to be when we grew up.

To get others to see us as grown-up, Jack said we had to show what we were going to look like years from now. We thought this was ridiculous. We knew we would grow up big and strong, but held no illusion that we could imagine exactly what that would look like.

Jack had a tough time comparing us to any other type of company out there. We were *kind of like* an Amazon.com or a Yahoo for the healthcare business. We were *kind of like* a couple of private companies that were being funded (Ariba and Commerce One). But we were *not really* very much like any of them.

We certainly didn't serve the consumer market, where growing sites with huge traffic were quite the buzz. And we weren't providing infrastructure, the software tools integrated into the way large companies run their day-to-day business, where enterprise software companies had made huge sums.

We were a company focused on improving a particular process in a particular industry. Since we couldn't be classified, most large investors weren't interested in speaking with us. They were seeing plenty of consumer Internet and business infrastructure companies to keep them busy.

We vigorously resisted classifying ourselves. We thought that it