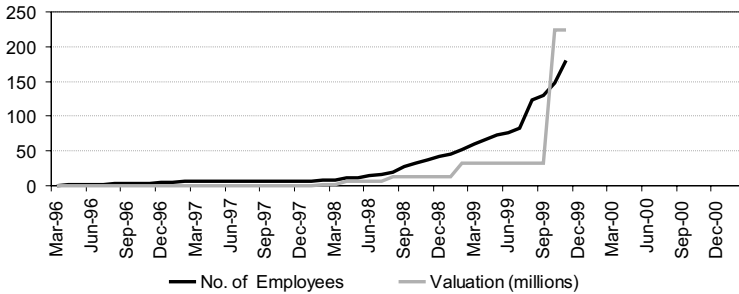


# November 1999



## **VerticalNet and Neoforma.com Announce Exclusive Multi-year E-commerce Agreement**

VerticalNet, Inc. the Internet's premier portfolio of business-to-business vertical trading communities and First Mover in the space, today announced a strategic alliance with Neoforma.com, Inc., a leading provider of B2B e-commerce services in the market for medical products, supplies and equipment . . .

*Neoforma Press Release  
November 22, 1999*

# Compatriots



I hadn't exactly expected to metaphorically run toward each other in slow motion, arms outstretched, through a field of flowers on a sunny day. I just thought that we had been watching each other fondly from afar for so long that something slightly magical might happen between us when we first met.

VerticalNet had been founded in 1995, just a few months before Neoforma. We were both old-timers in Internet B2B. Neoforma had been founded on the idea of using technology to improve the unique problems inherent in the healthcare supply chain. VerticalNet had been founded on the idea of using technology to improve the common problems inherent in the supply chain of many industries.

In our early days, Jeff and I had been approached by all sorts of people who liked what we were doing for healthcare and wanted us to do the same sort of thing for their industry. This was very tempting. Creating fundamental change in healthcare was huge. The idea of replicating that change in multiple large industries was mesmerizing. We could be the Microsoft of business processes.

However, each time we looked at the specifics of another industry, we came to the reluctant conclusion that, while there were certainly many similarities between each industry's inefficiencies, the differences were too large to ignore and too massive to address.

That didn't keep us from watching VerticalNet try though. Our own insecurity over our decision to limit Neoforma's scope had fueled our criticism of VerticalNet over the years. VerticalNet had made a different choice. They'd gone a mile wide and an inch deep, but that just didn't seem to cut it. Their most innovative feature, a fairly recent function that broadcast email from a single visitor to multiple manufacturers, seemed to be a nearly exact copy of the system we had deployed years earlier.