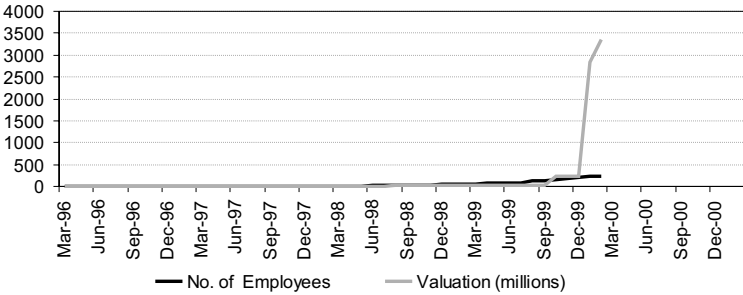


# February 2000



## What the Heck is Healthcon?

Jim Clark set out to build an Internet start-up that would revolutionize healthcare . . . Clark, never one to admit mistakes easily, concedes his vision was perhaps “a bit” too big and the industry more resistant to change than he had imagined . . .

*Fortune*  
February 21, 2000

# Fame



I was lost in the place between external validation and internal detachment. Between elation and dread.

In the jubilant days after the IPO, we quickly realized that our stock, which eventually moved into the seventies, was so valuable that we could accelerate our business in ways we hadn't imagined—through acquisitions and partnerships. Everyone wanted to be bought by us.

Our sudden prominence meant that everyone in any business that, however remotely, overlapped with ours was calling to propose that we *work together*. They saw our \$4 billion market cap as a gold mine.

The opportunities that flooded our doors required thorough analysis before reaching any kind of negotiation phase. So, I had the bright idea that the company's five primary iconoclasts—Jeff, the wanderer; Anil, the missionary; Dave, the inventor; Stephen, the salesman; and me, the architect—band together and tackle the task of researching opportunities.

Short, intense, intelligent analysis combined with a shrewd knowledge of the complex healthcare and Internet markets—that sounded like something this bunch of misfits could handle. The company liked the idea too. They weren't quite sure what to do with us anyway. We were good start-up types, but no one wanted us to disrupt the execution phase.

So, I assembled the crew together and we began to analyze the opportunities. As I should have foreseen, asking this group of people to narrow the list of prospects was an exercise in futility. We were too used to seeing every obstacle as an opportunity.

The group only met for a couple of months before we scattered back into various folds of the company, trying to recover the sense of importance and belonging we had once felt there.