

Fishing for business

DPSA director, Jacques Tesson, moved to Australia from France in 1984. Now the former engineer runs a distribution business focusing on datacentre solutions. He spoke to DAVID RAMLI about being loyal in business and fishing.



What was your first job?

My first job was in a bank sorting mail. I was a student with three months holiday a year so I just decided I needed to make money to buy myself a good tape recorder. Then they asked me to chase bad debt, so I was in the division where the cheques received were bouncing and I had to call the issuer and find out what was happening. That's interesting when you're 20.

What did you study at university?

I studied electronics engineering, advanced molecular dynamic mechanics – basically, how the electrons move inside matter, so it was all pretty nerdy. I did a lot of study and went up to a PhD.

How did you end up in IT?

All my career I've been finding out what can go wrong in things – what can break down, faulty components and trying to prevent the event. In the early days, when I was working in Paris, I was moved to the micro-electronic division so I was testing chips. That was the era when we were moving from electro-mechanics to electronic exchanges so that's when I moved into IT.

How did you progress to where you are today?

I realised that my degree in engineering didn't really allow me to be fully used unless I went into research. I kept seeing this representative that was moving around pretty freely so I thought, 'I'd like to meet a few more people outside the coffee space in the office'. So I went into selling electronic components for the manufacturing industry.

What do you like about your current job?

The diché is that "business is business" and that no emotion should come into business, but that's

really wrong. People are the business and they have emotions and sensitivity. I enjoy going through the successes, celebrations and the downs day-to-day as well because business expresses itself through people.

What is the biggest achievement of your career?

My biggest achievement was to win over a telco company, which after 25 years finally understood my concept, understood the value-adding and finally allowed us to introduce good technology for security and protection in server environments. I can't take full credit for it myself because we work as a team. It took about three to four years of work.

What do you dislike most about IT?

I dislike people that make short-term decisions because of the economic situation. For example, you've got a lot of resellers in the IT industry desperate for business so they're turning themselves into what they call "sub-distributors". It does chagrin me to see manufacturers and certain distributors that allow a new tier to be created because it places unnecessary stress on industry margins and delivery. It destroys some people's hard work. The buck stops with the manufacturer. If the manufacturer has a channel strategy, they should maintain integrity.

What will be the 'next big thing' in the industry?

The next big thing is basically total integration of datacentres with full physical security, cooling and management, scalability and fast deployment. We have launched a product that is basically a vault. It typically takes seven to nine months to build a wall around a datacentre before you add the hardware. You can build a room in about three days instead of going to an architect and consultant, property manager, council approval and so on.

What is the main focus for your company?

My main focus is to fulfil client demand. Right now, the IT industry needs to make itself efficient. They want to virtualise and use whiteboxes as application servers and the environment for this must be proper. It could be a powerful machine, but what's the use if it's not secured? This creates demand for us, which is what I'm busy talking to people about.

What do you do when you are not at work?

I've got two teenage daughters, which is challenging, but I like to try and understand them. They're 18 and 15 and I'm trying to grab them to go on holiday. Also fishing – I took a six-month course to learn how fish think. They're like lions,

Company Snapshot

- DPSA is a Sydney-based company founded in 1994.
- It is a datacentre and server protection implementer that provides site auditing and disaster recovery planning.
- The company has installed over 1000 power management solutions for enterprise customers.

you have to understand fish to catch them. You can be at the jetty, toss your line as far as you can to get the biggest fish but eventually find out all the fish are under the jetty.

What's the biggest fish you've ever caught?

The biggest fish I've caught is a Kingfish that was about one metre long. I've got a very good fishing partner and it's his passion. I like to catch one fish and if it feeds my family, that's all I'll do.

Do you cook?

Everywhere I go, because I'm French, people ask me to cook. I make lobster soufflé and for dessert I make chocolate éclairs. I'm good at that one. I tease people when they come to my house and ask "Jacques cook us something" by cooking them Chinese food.

Do you like gadgets?

I like the latest stuff, but I haven't switched to a BlackBerry so maybe I'm a dinosaur. I got a big Lenovo ThinkPad W700, but I've got a little Eee PC for using on the go.

What is your biggest ambition?

To see my wife happy. Which she is, but I'd like to see that continue. My work ambition is to be self-maintained. I'm not ready to hit retirement, but I'd like to take a few days off a week. I've earned it! I'd love to spend three months every year in Port Douglas, three months every year in Sydney and a few months every year in Tuscany or Majorca and then seeing friends and family in the US.

What do you think of France extending the working week?

It's mean. My strategy is that you need a good bed because you spend eight hours in it. You need good shoes because you spend 12 hours in them and because you have to work, you need a good job. A good job isn't pushing paper and being bureaucratic, a good job is to enjoy communicating. We've got a big brain so we've got to use it. ■