



## [Interview] Part 2: Allen Atwell - Career and Business Insights

In this blog series, I have an exclusive interview with **Allen Atwell**, a top international IT expert and authority, a leading senior executive and the Chief Technology Officer at MessageLabs.

Enjoy!

Stephen Ibaraki, **FCIPS, I.S.P., MVP**



**Opening Comment:** Allen, you bring a lifetime of proven top-ranking international leadership and technology experience combined with substantial contributions to the industry, through your sustained history of many successes. Considering your impossible schedule, we thank you for doing this interview with us.

**A:** Thank you for having me.

**Q1:** Our audience consists of varying levels of both ICT/Business professionals and those in management. What valuable career and business insights can you share from your tenure with the companies you've worked for?

**A:**

- **Texas Instruments:** As a fresh software engineer, I continued to develop my university programming skills with seasoned professionals at TI. I worked with hexadecimal code to maximize the limited CPU and memory constraints of distributed computing. I was required to rely on algorithms to accomplish highly technical projects. I also gained insight into internationalization when Headquarters rolled out an application internationally and sent me to Denmark to confront the challenges of an international language, character sets and custom legal requirements. A six-month expatriate assignment turned into six years abroad living in eight countries. I learned the value of an international business perspective and how to think creatively to solve problems for which there were no ready-made solutions.
- **Digital Equipment:** Distributed, scalable solutions and Internationalization were again key while I was managing the datacenter monitoring and telecommunications engineering team in Sophia-Antipolis, the Technology Park in the South of France. European telecommunications requirements were much stricter than those of North America. The position required diversity and specialization in telecommunications and telecom solutions as well as a keen sense of mobility as we logged into remote systems securely via the first emerging mobile laptops from Texas Instruments, Toshiba & Fujitsu decades before it became mainstream as it is today.
- **Bell Labs/ AT&T:** I specialized in the design and innovation of ISPs for telecommunications operators around the globe, which required thinking creatively to deploy technology that would meet the evolving needs of the telecom industry. In the 1990s, when Internet became a public domain, my team was asked to co-architect AT&T's Worldnet Service. From 'day zero', the goal was to ensure it was fully internationalized, a feature I was fully prepared to deliver given my previous international experience.
- **S.W.I.F.T.:** My first experience with world-class security and reliability was for S.W.I.F.T., a banking managed service provider that has never lost a message since its inception more than 40 years ago. Here, I designed their worldwide mission-critical, triple-protection IP network and dealt with high security alerts even prior to 9/11. Failure was not an option at S.W.I.F.T. As Head of Telecoms and Technology Strategy, I endeavored to provide new value added services to customers. This required not only re-architecting the entire worldwide network with multiple Service Providers but also effectively anticipating and responding to customer needs.

- **Trader.com:** As the company moved its 260 paper publications online across 17 countries, it endeavored to go public at the same time. To accomplish this, I managed a rapid talent recruitment process hiring 50 top software engineers in a four-week timeframe in preparation for the rapidly approaching IPO. I had to draw on all my networked resources and think quickly to select the best in the industry -- those who I knew were most capable of rising to the challenge. Our team brought the company to IPO in six months.
- **Oracle:** Returning to my roots in mobility and telecommunications, I first managed Oracle's B2B Marketplace Exchange Service, a managed service application. These were high volume, high value service delivery platforms for very large consolidated global businesses, including large telecom operators. I built on all previous lessons of security, managed services, internationalization and telecommunications expertise.

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