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[Interview] Part 3: Allen Atwell - Five Global Management Lessons Plus MessageLabs Details

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**



Q2: What five key lessons can you provide taken from your global management experience?

A:

1. **Culture and language:** The ability to listen and communicate with customers and employees is crucial. I learned the value of this by living and working around the world. I believe it is impossible to learn this culture from a book or class room. It's a real-life experience.
2. **Employee management:** Managers can reap the most benefit from their employees when they learn how to effectively identify and build on individual strengths with positive reinforcement.
3. **Honesty:** Being honest with customers is always the best policy. Act as a trusted advisor clueing them in to how to obtain longevity and reliability from recommended solutions to help customers stretch the limits of what is available on the market.
4. **Risk management:** As business becomes increasingly globalized, managers must be adept at understanding and mitigating global risks including cultural miscommunications, currency fluctuations, embargos and both natural and man-made disasters.
5. **Effective problem solving:** Make new mistakes while repeating success; Eighty percent of a customer solution can often be re-used to benefit another customer with a similar challenge.

Q3: Profile your current specific role at MessageLabs and your own personal ... (subjects listed below):

A: As CTO of MessageLabs, a provider of integrated messaging and web security services to businesses worldwide, I am responsible for driving all global research and development to further evolve MessageLabs product vision and long-term technology strategy worldwide.

- **Vision:** My vision for MessageLabs is that we can build on the great existing momentum through continual innovation that will allow us to maintain our leadership in threat protection for clients around the world. My vision in my role as CTO is that I will be working within an environment at MessageLabs that has the right infrastructure, people and critical mass to be able to take MessageLabs to the next level - to be respected on a global scale as a world technology leader in our field of expertise.
- **Mission:** MessageLabs mission is to deliver managed security service solutions in a predictable, reliable manner, helping customers whose expertise is not secure communications, by delivering a service that adds value so they can concentrate on their core business.
- **Strategy:** My strategy is to ensure that the MessageLabs solution is world class and continue to generate and improve our intellectual property by research, documentation and patenting.
- **Goals:** To generate and implement intellectual property on a cost effective infrastructure that is fail-proof.
- **Obiectives:** Our kev obiectives involve publication and delivery on a predictable and reliable roadman by

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building and re-shaping the organization of R&D as well as instilling a work ethic and environment that is enjoyable and promotes the exchange of ideas.

- **Details of a typical work period:** As CTO of a Global organization which follows the sun, I start my day at 8 a.m. in our Gloucester, England office responding to our APAC colleagues by phone/email at the end of their workday. I then get straight into work with our EMEA team, meeting with executives. After lunch, I continue meetings with our North American team to review/address challenges. I usually end my work day listening to employee concerns and ideas for intellectual property. I dedicate weekends to my personal interests like hiking, biking and private aviation.

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