



Credit Matt Asay

Six Questions

with Stuart Cohen

CEO of Collaborative Software Initiative

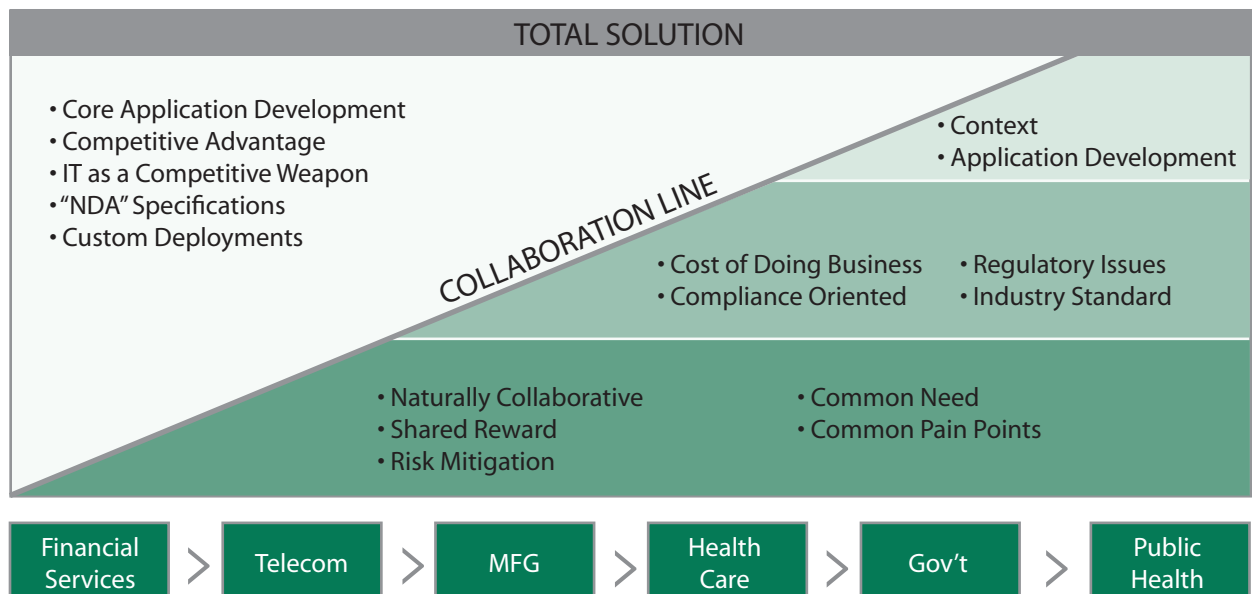
What is Collaborative Software Initiative?

At our foundation, Collaborative Software Initiative is a software company. We look for opportunities to bring our teaming and development methodology to groups of likeminded organizations looking to solve application challenges that can be rolled out throughout their ecosystem.

How did you come up with the idea for Collaborative Software Initiative?

Collaborative Software Initiative was a logical extension of my work with the Customer Advisory Council during my tenure as CEO of the Open Source Development Lab. While there, our charter was to advance open source technologies such as Linux. A common theme from the companies on the Advisory Council was their desire to solve common needs with collaboration and open source solutions. CSI provides the methodologies and skills necessary to execute on these needs.

We have found that the area for success in establishing communities exists below the competitive diagonal:



This area below the collaborative line can become quite large as you move toward the right of the chart in areas like public health and government, or quite narrow on the other end of the spectrum in highly competitive industries like financial services and telecommunications.



What differentiates you from other software companies?

Collaborative Software Initiative believes in the power of collaboration. We collaborate with our customers in every step of the application life cycle from initial vision through planning and design, to development and maintenance. Our belief is the power of collaboration can reduce cost, mitigate risk, speed development and infuse new ideas to solve complex issues.

Do you have some examples of where CSI has been successful?

In showing the strength of our model we have built projects in the financial services area as well as public health.

In the financial services arena we have recently released our CSI SIG product which is an open source self assessment regulatory compliance application. CSI SIG provides the financial services community an efficient and intuitive application for responding to the need for GLBA compliance while reducing risk and liability for their customers. This need was identified by over 50 members of the BITS Shared Assessments Program led by key Wall Street firms.

In the public health arena, we are preparing to open source our infectious disease surveillance application, CSI TriSano,™ which will have a major impact on the public health community. Specifically, we are hoping that our development model and the resulting technology, enables migration from monolithic reporting centric applications to user centric applications. Gathering information through interactions with citizens and providing the transparency for public health officials to make a positive impact on the health and well being of their citizens.

How does CSI add value to what already takes place naturally?

While online collaboration and much of today's software development takes place naturally among interested individuals, open source projects don't exist for many of the most needed applications in vertical industries such as financial services. With government and industry standards becoming both more strict and pervasive, like-minded companies (in most cases, competitors), are looking for ways to accelerate and cost-effectively manage development and compliance. CSI takes the best of the Linux and open source development models to form communities where none exist and build collaborative software that effectively addresses these requirements.

What values does Collaborative Software Initiative like to convey to clients?

We have a passion for delivering customer centric solutions through a community based approach to problem solving. We hold the following ideals as central components to our success:

- Altruism in contributing back our works to communities and our focus on industries traditionally underserved by technology
- Innovation in constantly pushing the boundaries "why not"
- Integrity in our relationships with communities promoting open dialog, visibility of purpose and the courage to do what is right.