

# The Human Side of Bits, Bytes and Business

## *How **PDI**'s focus on service took it from startup to global ERP software company*

**T**emple, Texas-based PDI has come a long way since its days as a startup in 1983. Today, with its solutions serving more than 1200 customers and over 100,000 locations, PDI is the leading provider of enterprise software and services to convenience retailers and petroleum wholesalers around the globe.

### Can You Hear Me Now?

It was a question made famous in the early 2000s by the telecommunications company, Verizon, but it's something customers have asked businesses for decades.

*"That question is really about a company's commitment to listening and providing great service for its customers," says Jimmy Frangis, CEO of PDI. "For us, providing excellent customer service and ensuring our customers' success is at the core of everything we do. They come first. That belief is ingrained in our corporate culture, and it goes back to the very beginning."*

Partnering with its customers is something the company has done since building its first enterprise-class software solution in the 1980s—the PDI/Resource Management Series (PDI/RMS).

But according to Frangis, those days were challenging, to say the least.

*"Nine out of 10 startups fail, and we certainly could have," Frangis says. "Our first accounting solution was built on Texas Instruments' TI-990 platform, which was abruptly discontinued, essentially making our software obsolete."*

Under normal circumstances, a fledgling software company might have imploded, relegating its youthfully optimistic visionaries to the annals of failed startup history. But PDI's story is different.



### Meet the CEO

**Jimmy Frangis, CEO:** Jimmy joined PDI in 2016 and is responsible for setting the strategic vision and direction for the company. As CEO, he brings more than 20 years of experience in retail software. Prior to PDI, Jimmy served in various leadership positions at NCR Corporation, including vice president and general manager of the global petroleum and convenience retail business. Prior to joining NCR, he held multiple leadership positions at Radiant Systems.

Jimmy Frangis, CEO

*"We came together with 21 customers to rebuild our software," says Frangis. "They invested in us because the relationships our employees built with them translated into trust in our company. Thanks to their investment and, more importantly, their input about what should be included in the software, we were able to build an incredible solution that many companies still use today."*

PDI repeated the successful formula when it collaborated with more than 250 customers to design PDI/Enterprise—its second enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution. Since its release, the software has become one of the most widely installed ERP solutions for multi-site convenience retailers and petroleum wholesalers.

*"Our success is based on two things: our dedication to helping our customers succeed and our consistent practice of partnering with and listening to our customers to ensure our solutions fully address their needs," says Frangis. "In fact, that was part of the impetus for our global expansion."*

## Expanding the Portfolio and Global Reach

For the better part of its history, PDI was one of the leading ERP software providers to the convenience retail and petroleum wholesale industries. Still, many of the company's long-held goals remained unrealized.

*"For all our success, our reach was largely limited to North America, but our vision was always to provide excellent solutions and service to*

*customers around the globe," says Frangis. "In addition, we wanted to be able to fully address the needs of our customers, regardless of their size or place in the fuel supply chain. We did convenience retail really well, and we could address the needs of petroleum wholesalers in a limited capacity. But we wanted to do more."*

In 2016, following an infusion of capital by Massachusetts-based investment firm TA Associates, PDI began expanding its portfolio with a series of acquisitions. The first was Intellifuel Systems, a Florida-based logistics and fuel supply chain management company.

*"One of the main areas in our portfolio we wanted to bolster was our petroleum wholesale solution," says Frangis. "Purchasing Intellifuel was a big win for us because, among other things, it added much needed logistics management capabilities to our product line that would've otherwise taken years to develop."*

In a move to further penetrate the market and strengthen its leadership position, PDI acquired The Pinnacle Corporation's ERP assets in January of 2017. But the company didn't stop there. This past April, PDI further expanded its product portfolio and solidified its commitment to globalization with the announcement of three additional acquisitions: DataMax Group, Inc., FireStream Worldwide Inc. and LOMOSOFT.

*"DataMax and LOMOSOFT give us an international presence and enable us to provide customers with a single, integrated solution in the countries they serve," explains Frangis. "DataMax also increases our ability*

*to address the needs of single store and small chain operators, while LOMOSOFT expands the depth of our logistics offering, particularly in Europe. FireStream is a significant investment in our petroleum wholesale capabilities and gives us a solution that the industry already knows and respects."*

## Looking to the Future

Following its series of acquisitions, PDI has more than 400 employees, and its solutions are deployed and serving customers in more than 50 countries worldwide. But Frangis says this 34-year-old ERP software company is just getting started.

*"It's an exciting time for PDI," he says. "We've made strategic investments in portfolio expansion, and we now have a complete portfolio of software solutions that address the specialized needs of retailers—including single site and multi-site operators—petroleum wholesalers and carriers. Our vision of being the global leader in the industries we serve is being realized, but we're constantly striving to be better."*

When asked what's next for his company, without hesitation, Frangis brings it back to the basics.

*"You can have good products, but great companies are built around great relationships," he says. "PDI has a history of building great relationships with its customers. We do that by providing excellent customer service and producing great products that increase visibility and help our customers thrive in a digital economy. And that's exactly what we'll continue to do."*