



BBBT Podcast Transcript



About the BBT

The Boulder Business Intelligence Brain Trust, or BBT, was founded in 2006 by Claudia Imhoff. Its mission is to leverage business intelligence for industry vendors, for its members, who are independent analysts and experts, and for its subscribers, who are practitioners. To accomplish this mission, the BBT provides a variety of services, centered around vendor presentations.

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Host:	Claudia Imhoff , Founder, BBT
Guest(s):	Darren Cunningham , Vice President of Marketing, Ravi Dharnikota , Chief Architect, Craig Stewart , Vice President of Product Management
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Claudia: Hello, and welcome to this edition of the Boulder BI Brain Trust, or the BBT. We're a gathering of international consultants, analysts, and experts in business intelligence, who meet with interesting and innovative BI companies here in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. We not only get briefed on the latest news and releases, but we share our ideas with the vendor on where the BI industry is going, and help them with their technological directions and marketing messages. I'm Claudia Imhoff and the BBT podcasts are produced by my company, Intelligent Solutions.

I'm pleased to introduce my guests today. They are Darren Cunningham, Ravi Dharnikota, and Craig Stewart. Darren is the vice president of marketing, Ravi is the chief architect, and Craig is the vice president of product management for SnapLogic. Welcome to all of you.

Darren: Great to be here.

Craig: Thanks very much. Good to be here.

Ravi: Thanks for inviting us. Glad to be in Boulder.

Claudia: I'm happy that you're in Boulder, as well. Darren, let me start with you. Let's start with SnapLogic's vision and message. You have a great tagline. "Don't let your legacy integration solution be your legacy." That is so good. Why don't you talk a little bit about how SnapLogic can help someone prevent being a legacy?

Darren: It's interesting, our founder and CEO, Gaurav Dhillon, who you may know. He founded and ran Informatica for 12 years. He likes to call it "Same old, same old integration," or "SO SO". There's so much temptation in the enterprise to just not change.

Even as you cloudify, as you think about big data, the data integration is the hard stuff. A lot of organizations think, "Oh, we can just do that later." What we're trying to do is bring that to the surface, and really focus on speed. We like to say, "accelerate your integration, accelerate your business."



That's really a key theme for us, as we talk to customers about really cloudifying, and adopting these, and embracing, and getting maximum ROI of all these investments.

Claudia: That's the basis for a lot of these newer data integration technologies. Let's just start fresh. Let's start from the ground up, right?

Darren: It's easier said than done. We like to start with the project, and show results quickly, and then expand from there.

Claudia: Ravi, what are the typical characteristics of your customers?

Ravi: I want to just take a look at this from what happens in an organization that makes them look at integration as a platform that needs to be modernized.

When people start looking at digital transformation, or cloudification, there's a lot of cloud apps that they're adopting, or they start looking at this concept of data lake, and getting to the big data ecosystem. They start looking at a platform that makes it easy for them to consume all that data, and be able to connect these apps in an easy, intuitive way, and democratize the integration and consumption of that data.

Modernization of this whole infrastructure, these data systems that they have, is a big, compelling factor that drives them to take a look at SnapLogic.

Claudia: Talk to me about one or two of your customers. How are they specifically using your product?

Ravi: Sure. I can bring up Adobe, and CapitalOne, who have basically standardized on this SnapLogic platform around this idea of democratization, of integration, and data integration as well. They started with cloud app integration, and then they immediately saw a need for bringing something like SnapLogic to ease their pain in bringing data integration to the masses, or to the different lines of



businesses for consumption and integration. That's when they started looking at SnapLogic, and it's been very successful at these two customers.

Darren: Another point that I'd add on Adobe is the broad adoption of SnapLogic. We'll talk in a little bit about our self-serve interface here today, but they have over 400 users of SnapLogic. They've created a self-service portal where you can go and get provisioned very, very quickly, get up and running, and start doing some of your own integration.

It's just amazing how they've really re-thought everything, and eliminated a lot of their technical debt. We've helped them move away from tools like TIBCO, and Informatica, and WebMethods, and a lot of custom coding.

Claudia: Why did they move from those tools? What was the draw to bring them in?

Darren: I think there are a couple of things. One, there was a business change. Adobe was moving to become a cloud company. Everything was moving to subscription, so there was a shift in company culture.

The second is the shift in IT. They've really embraced this idea of self-service. We had our champion from Adobe speaking at a Gartner conference recently, and people came up afterwards and asked them, "Culturally, how did you do that? How did you give access to these systems, and integrations, and maintain control?"

There was this climate of change there, and they, initially, were thinking about building it themselves. They're a tech company, they thought, "Oh, let's just go with a bunch of open source tools, and build something."

We talked them off that ledge, and we were able to show them with SnapLogic, they could do multiple styles of integration. We just keep expanding our use cases, and that's pretty typical.



Claudia: Craig, not to leave you out of the conversation, why don't you tell me a little bit more about the architecture? Describe the components, and how they interact with these scenarios.

Craig: What we did when we architected the product, was we separated the design/manage/monitor part of the application from the execution environment.

We have what we call the control plane, which is a SaaS application running in the cloud. All of our customers use that one version of the application to go through the process of building their integration tasks, to manage them, to monitor what's actually going on.

We separated the execution plane into what we call the "Snaplex." The Snaplex is made up of multiple nodes of execution, elastically scalable. The important thing about the Snaplex is, it is dedicated to each customer. There's no sharing of data or resources at that level. Once you're dealing with data, that's completely dedicated to a customer.

That's available as what we call a "Cloudplex," which is a managed service, run for the customers in the cloud, a "Groundplex," where they can run it behind their firewall, or in their cloud environment, and any environment that they choose.

A variant of that is to actually use what we call a "Hadooplex", where they actually run, as a native YARN application, in a Hadoop environment, and that gives the elastic scalability across the complete Hadoop cluster.

The third part is the snaps. The snaps provide our end point connectivity, and transformation functionality. Those are separated from the control plane, and the execution environment, and each customer can just use those that they wish to use for the applications that they have.



Those abstract the complexity of dealing with each of the different APIs of the applications, and make it easy for the customer to be able to use them without having to know the details of SOAP, or REST, or whatever native connectivity they may be using.

Claudia: You mentioned the cloud, but you're not just cloud based, right?

Craig: Absolutely. What we see with most of our customers is that they have a hybrid environment. Their data gravity is significantly on-premise, but as most organizations today, they've got some cloud applications, and, increasingly, they're using more of those cloud applications.

SnapLogic is actually deployed in the cloud, and/or on premise, to actually cope with all of those different environments.

Claudia: Darren, let me go back to you. How do you differentiate your technology from, let's say, traditional ETL vendors, and also from the newer data integration vendors that compete directly with you?

Darren: There's no shortage of excitement, and I think innovation, in this category. There's new vendors coming online all the time. There's legacy vendors that are trying to add new capabilities to their legacy products. It's harder to do. I'd say there's four key reasons, and differentiators for SnapLogic.

One is, you asked about ETL and data integration. We like to talk about how we have a unified platform for data and app integration, which means you don't have to have that separation of SOA, ESB or Enterprise Service Bus, and an ETL team. You have one platform, one team, one service. The first is unified platform.

The second is, what we'll talk a little bit more here today about, is self-service. We talked about it with the Adobe use case. We've built a very easy to use interface. We're trying to always innovate, and think through, how do we make it easier? How do we make this more approachable? But not simplifying it so that we can't do the hard stuff.



We have to be careful. We want to appeal to new users, but we also want to appeal to classic data engineers, and give them enough power to do what they need to do.

The third is our modern architecture. Craig talked a little bit about the nodes, and the separation of design time and runtime – a lot of real incredible things under the hood of the SnapLogic platform.

Then a third is our snaps. We want to make it snappy. Drag and drop, build these pipelines quickly. We have a library of over 400 snaps today. We have an SDK for building them, constantly revving and adding new connectors, and new transformations into our library.

Ravi: One more thing I would add is, just the fact that our data model is a document data model. It's JSON based, which is the language of the modern web. It's not XML, and it supports the idea of being able to handle unstructured, semi-structured, or unstructured data.

The other thing is, we're inherently a streaming platform, which means we don't necessarily hold onto data. We stream data through our platform, and are able to handle multiple, different use cases.

Claudia: What I found interesting was, yes, you can do the historical, static data. Take it in, integrate it, put it into something, but you also dealt with real-time data as well as the streaming data itself, too.

Ravi: That's right, yeah.

Claudia: All right, Craig. Back to you. An interesting question came up about the ever-changing technologies. When an application, for example, Salesforce, or WorkDay, or whatever it is, changes its underlying API, or database schema that you access, or you use as a target, how do you keep up? How does SnapLogic keep up with all of these technological changes?



Craig: That's an important thing. What we are doing is insulating, through these snaps, the customer from the complexities of these different APIs. By doing that, what we're doing is giving the customer the ability to build their pipelines, concentrate on the business of their business, rather than the business of integration.

On our side, that means that we have to be very careful. We build relationships with the different application vendors and technology vendors, so that we are up to date. We know what's coming in these different applications, and build our snaps to be backward compatible with the different versions, so that when those changes happen in those applications, it's transparent to the user. The snap takes care of that for them.

Claudia: If a change happens, am I notified at all that something has changed in the snaps?

Craig: You shouldn't need to be. You should be confident that the snap is going to continue to function. We work hard at building that. We have a team distributed around the world that is actually maintaining these snaps. We have a team here in Boulder, as well as in San Mateo, and in Hyderabad.

Claudia: Wonderful. Ravi, back to you. You mentioned the citizen data integrator. Basically, it's someone who's not perhaps an IT person, but does have some technological knowledge, I suppose. How do you support that role?

Ravi: One of the things that's always baffled me is that, why should I have a superior experience with my consumer device when I'm at play? When I come to work, I have to deal with this ugly UI that's not intuitive. It's supposed to be enterprise software. Why can they not combine the user interface from the consumer world in the enterprise world?

That's one the first basic things that hits you when you look at SnapLogic, is the UI is intuitive. It's easy to use. For a self-service model, it makes perfect sense for someone to take a look at that.



The other thing is, this idea of snaps. These connectors that are configurable. There's drop-down menus to choose different processing engines. The APIs are abstracted out, so you don't necessarily have to understand the complex object models, and so on, and so forth. The version numbers, etc. From that angle, the citizen integrator really has an advantage, when they start using SnapLogic, but from a slightly different perspective, a framework around that is also being put in place in SnapLogic.

Craig: You've got to have the governance that goes over that citizen integrator. Having the traceability of what's actually going on in the environment, who's actually done what in environment, and the complete permissionings model behind that, to ensure that the users have those guardrails up the side of the bowling alley.

Claudia: I like that. Someone can get themselves into a terrible mess, if they don't really understand what they're doing. To give them icons that make sense, to give them colors, to give them hints, whatever it is, so that they can do something properly, I think is what makes it very successful.

Craig: That's one of the key differentiators that Darren mentioned. Having our UX team continuously trying to keep our edge on the UX is very important for us.

Claudia: I would agree. Thank you, Craig. Darren, you have the last question. What's the future for SnapLogic? What do you see going on?

Darren: It's very bright. We had a record year in 2015, hundreds of new customers. I should give a plug here that we are hiring. We are growing. We're growing here in Boulder, and we're growing in San Mateo, and we're growing across the world. We have a new office in London, and an office in Australia. A big part of the near-term future is expansion, and really scaling out the business as we do that.

Another part of it is the shifting landscape of the analytics infrastructure. We see a big differentiator for our platform, in that we



can handle, we are built for, these new data in motion situations, not just data at rest.

We aren't tied to the old ETL, rows and columns kind of technology. We are excited about Spark. We're excited about Kafka. We're excited about some of these, really, innovations that are happening, and also the maturity of the market.

We have some interesting innovations that we are working on around metadata management, and governance, and security, and really thinking through what does the enterprise data lake need to look like?

Stay tuned. Watch this space, we are really doing some interesting things. I think a lot of it speaks to the core technology that we built, and the vision of our founder, Gaurav Dhillon, and what we're setting out to do. We're building a company for the long-term.

Claudia: For the long haul, excellent, and you're hiring for the long haul.

Darren: Did I mention that?

Claudia: Yeah, a couple of times.

Unfortunately, that's it for this edition of the BBBT Podcast. Again, I'm Claudia Imhoff, and it's been such a pleasure to speak with Darren Cunningham, Ravi Dharnikota, and Craig Stewart of SnapLogic today. Thanks to all of you.

Darren: Thank you, Claudia.

Craig: Thanks for having us.

Ravi: Thank you.

Claudia: I hope you enjoyed today's podcast. You'll find more podcasts from other vendors at our web site www.bbbt.us. If you want to read more about today's session, please search for our hash tag on



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