

# The art of entrepreneurship at Sage Summit 2016

With some 15,000 entrepreneurs and small business owners converging at The Sage Summit, our man in Chicago, Matthew Ooi, discovers what makes them tick



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One message rings clear at the Sage Summit 2016, and it is that Sage will continue to commit to being a partner-centric organisation that has entrepreneurs at the forefront.

Stephen Kelly, Sage Group CEO said "We all share the same ambitions, to delight our customers and grow our businesses, and we cannot achieve our ambitions without each other. Your success is our success."

"Together we have already created a unique and special ecosystem for entrepreneurs. The only ecosystem in our industry that can support a business from start-up through scale-up to enterprise, with awesome technology, partnerships and customer support."

Kelly explained Sage's consistent commitment over the years to their partners, and said "We make a difference day-in and day-out to the 3 million businesses using our software by putting them in control of their businesses. They are compliant and pay their taxes on time, pay their hardworking employees every month, and receive payments at speed to protect their cash flow. We also deliver insight so they can make the right choices for the future of their businesses."

**"Awesome teamwork always wins the day."**

Sage is a British multinational enterprise software company. Publicly listed on the London Stock Exchange, Sage has been around for 35 years, providing its customers with accounting software with innovative solutions. Headquartered in Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom, Sage today employs 13,000 people across the world.

The Sage Summit is the world's largest gathering of entrepreneurs, with over 15,000 SMEs, Sage partners and accountants taking part in networking, education, inspiration and technology experience.

It is through this annual conference of SMEs that Sage conveys a message of camaraderie among its partners, which includes value added resellers, system Integrators,



**Stephen Kelly, Sage Group CEO speaking about partnerships and revolutions at Sage**



## Sage's strategic pillars

- 1. Winning in the market.** By building market leading cloud solutions for businesses to run on. By having the best marketing. By building the best brand underpinned by trust, and by providing the best customer experience in the business.
- 2. Customers for Life.** We stand behind the commitment we made last year at Sage Summit; no forced migrations for any of our customers. Not only will we continue to support their product, whether it be desktop or cloud, for as long as the customer wants to use it, but in many cases we're modernising our desktop solutions so they have a refresh of the user interface and are cloud connected.
- 3. Revolutionising business.** We aren't here to catch up. Now it's about leapfrogging. To revolutionise business by building the most innovative, brilliant, easy to use accounting, payroll and payment solutions on the planet. Inventing the future is core to Sage now. Long-term Partners have told us that they have seen more innovations from Sage in the last year than ever before. This is just the start. We have some cool technology incubators in the labs nurtured by our technology team.
- 4. Capacity for Growth.** When we talk about building capacity for growth at Sage, it's about simplifying our systems, our business, and making it easier to operate so Partners and Sage can scale faster than ever. Our Partner platform is our Capacity for Growth. You are the means to grow faster and more sustainably with customer success. That's why we're committed to best-in-class Partner enablement. Providing you, our Partners, with superior marketing so you can win more new customers. Supporting your mission to double or triple the size of your business.

cloud software partners, accountants and bookkeepers, among others.

Kelly said, "In the early 1990s at Oracle I was honoured to be asked by then Oracle President Ray Lane to be part of a small team charged with a mission to transform Oracle from being a company that competed with its partners to having one of the best partner programs and ecosystems in the industry."

"We recruited thousands of partners, rewired the culture of the company and created a business relationship that was based on win-win. The result was exponential business growth with and through its partners."

## Cloud innovations

With Sage being the leading provider of accounting software globally, Kelly credits innovation as the key of Sage's success and growth over the years. The cloud platform is one example of Sage having to continually innovate to stay ahead.

Kelly said, "The marketplace is evolving at record speed, accelerated by mobile, social, big data and cloud. The International Data Corporation (IDC) calls this the biggest change in 30 years. Customers are buying services, not servers. They are looking to use Software as a Service (SaaS) to replace older systems. By 2020, between 60-70% of all software, services and technology spending will be cloud based."

"Technology disruption has dictated that Sage reinvents its business to embrace the cloud. In technology there are only two types of companies - growing companies or dying companies. History does not look kindly on those businesses which ignored disruption."

According to Kelly, the number of cloud independent software vendors (ISVs) will double by the end of 2017, and the market for services in 2017 alone will increase by a fac-

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— Kelly

tor of 10. "The cloud has commoditised some elements of the value chain; thus we need to help you find ways to differentiate and take advantage of the growth." **MSME**