Meet Piers Carey, CEO at Teneo

Jim Ries: Hello, and welcome to Java with Jim. I'm Jim Ries, director of business development at Offit Kurman. Joined here today with Piers Carey, CEO at Teneo. Piers, how are you today?

Piers Carey: I'm doing very well, Jim.

Great to be here with you, and thanks for inviting me.

Jim Ries: Yeah, thanks for joining us. So Piers, tell us about Teneo uh, your role there, and from your perspective, what makes your company unique?

Piers Carey: Hmm. Thanks, Jim. Yeah good question. My role is CEO and founder of Teneo. Teneo was founded in the year 2000 which was a baptism of fire for us because from a tech point of view, it was right around the time when the big tech wreck happened, and so our first few months were very, very interesting, very...

learnt a lot in that time. But basically, yeah, my role today is absolutely focused on strategy for the business, what's coming next for us, particularly how do we incorporate AI into our [00:01:00] operations and help our customers with that too.

Jim Ries: Yeah, and Piers, just on a 30,000-foot view, keeping it simple, what do you guys do there at Teneo?

Piers Carey: Yeah. I Like to look at it as we connect users to their applications, and that's what people need. If you're working away, you just wanna be able to get to your stuff, you want it to be able to work, with good performance, and you want it to be secure, and that's really what we help our customers do to make those connections and also to give IT teams visibility into those connections when things go wrong.

So network security, AI security, two particularly big areas but then also, designing networks so that they run efficiently and optimized. So we do that. And actually, for companies usually around the $1 to $5 billion revenue marker is our sweet spot. A lot of organizations in manufacturing and legal and those kinds of verticals.

Jim Ries: Got it. Nice. When you think about Teneo, [00:02:00] what are you most proud of and why?

Piers Carey: Okay. I Just love the moments when our technical teams in their various incarnations are sat in front of a customer, and they have that almost unique ability to surprise our customers with their insights. I like to think that we are a likable company.

I like to think that we are knowledgeable. We have in-depth and interesting things to bring to customer meetings, and that's what we wanna do. We wanna bring new ideas, new insights to our customers because that's what keeps us relevant. When I think of what I'm most proud of, it is those times when we're sat with a customer, they've got a challenge, and we are able to help them get past that and get through that.

And sometimes it can be, pretty daunting. In the security world, we've had, customers who've gone through breaches and things like that, and there's a lot of stress around that. From a business point of view, a lot of business value is on the line, and we gotta [00:03:00] be there for our customers and bring them new ideas.

So I love it when we do that.

Jim Ries: Is it fair to say that you make IT interesting?

Piers Carey: That's a heavy uh, that's a heavy thing- ... Jim. Great question. I wish we did. Sometimes I think we can do that. There's another thing that I'm really proud of. As a company, we love technology, but also we really care about something else, and that's education for children.

And about 10, maybe even 15 years ago now, we set ourselves a goal to improve the lives of a million children around the world, and as a company we've been investing in school building and programs to help kids, mostly in places like Madagascar, Ethiopia, Sub-Saharan Africa to have a better life, and I'm super proud of the way the whole company stepped up to help us with that.

Jim Ries: I did see that on your website, and that's incredible. Thank you for the work that you [00:04:00] do. So Piers, what are you excited about heading into the next six months?

Piers Carey: So one of the things I'm particularly excited about is, you know... And I was trying to think of something that wasn't AI, right?

Jim Ries: Yeah.

Piers Carey: Because how many times, I'm sure, when you've asked that question, there's some variant on AI.

But truth be told, it is an incredibly exciting and also slightly scary time with AI. And so over the next six months, what we're seeing some of our customers realize is that, AI is almost getting slightly out of control. And what I say by that, I don't mean the horror stories of, this monster AI going to hack your competitors or things like that, but the proliferation of AI tools in organizations.

It's hard sometimes for IT teams to know which tools people are using, what they're uploading into these models. What questions, what [00:05:00] agents are they creating to do what on the network? And so some of the things that we're working with right now really help IT organizations control the AI environment that they have.

So users can use it, but they can use it safely. And I think- That's a really interesting area, particularly in the next six months. So yeah, looking forward to that.

Jim Ries: Amen to that using AI safely. You're right- ... it seems a bit scary. All right, Piers, here's the fun question. What's something about you personally that might surprise the people watching this video?

Piers Carey: Gosh another good question. I can juggle fire.

Jim Ries: Wow.

Piers Carey: Yeah and I don't mean the kind of metaphorical juggling of fire when you have lots of things you gotta deal with, but actual fire. So I learned how to juggle fire gosh, probably 30 years ago.

Jim Ries: So those are linear bars that have, or rods that have fire on either end.

Is that what we're talking about? [00:06:00]

Piers Carey: Yeah. So basically you have juggling clubs and, you set fire to three of them, and then you juggle them. And I learned because I was in a musical called Barnum, gosh, let's say 30 years ago, and I had to learn a whole bunch of circus skills, fire juggling, knife juggling, unicycling.

It was great fun. And so I can still do that today if called upon.

Jim Ries: Oh, man. Listen you're the guy everybody wants at their party, for sure. I don't know about the fire part, but that's amazing. Good for you. What a great story to share. Listen, Piers, thank you for joining us today and sharing your story about Teneo and your juggling skills as well. Really appreciate your time, and I hope to see you sometime soon.

Piers Carey: Thanks, Jim. Appreciate it.

Jim Ries: You bet. See ya.

Piers Carey: See ya.