

## BI Radio

### Episode 10: Cognos Forum 2008

(00:00)

**Station ID:** This is BI Radio.

#### Montage:

- Forum is always great fun.
- The theme of the whole conference is acceleration. Well I got assigned a great challenge. Accelerating imagination.
- I'm always learning, always seeing new approaches, new angles.
- We all attend a lot of conferences. How do we actually survive these things?
- I find really good planning helps.
- Go to all of the opportunities. Take advantage of each and every one.
- Comfortable shoes.
- Make sure you get the swag.

(00:36)

**Ken Seeley:** Hi there. And welcome to BI Radio. I'm Ken Seeley. For the show today we focus on Cognos Forum, our annual user conference taking place this May at the Venetian, in Las Vegas. We'll hear from keynote speaker, business strategist, and celebrated author Don Tapscott, about Wikinomics, and why it's so important to play nice with others. Our Technology Soup panel gives us a preview of what they'll be up to on the floors of Performance World. And first up, what's up with your handshake? Kelsey Howarth talks to host of Cognos Forum, Mark Jeffries, on his new book, Mastering Soft Skills, and how to increase your nods per minute.

(01:24)

**Kelsey Howarth:** Hi. I'm Kelsey Howarth. Today you're going to join me as I speak to former Merrill Lynch stockbroker Mark Jeffries who's become a trusted advisor and communications consultant to some of the world's largest and most successful companies. Mark is a talented speaker who regularly appears as an image and communications expert on network television news, finance and lifestyle programs. Here, he joins me to discuss his new book, What's Up With Your Handshake?, the value of Soft Skills in the workplace, and what attendees can expect from him as host of Cognos Forum in May.

(02:09)

**Kelsey Howarth:** You have a new book coming out called What's Up With Your Handshake? Congratulations. Can you tell us a bit about it?

**Mark Jeffries:** Well I would love to. And thank you very much for the opportunity. The book is about the tiny, minute soft skills and strategic communication that we all use all the time, and how we can harness the power of those things to get ahead of the competition. And the reason I use the word handshake in the title is, well, it always stuns me. We all know in terms of common sense how to shake hands. Everyone seems to know what to do, and yet, every day in business, and in the social world, you shake hands with someone and you're stunned by how awful it can be. Either incredibly overly strong, overpowering, or perhaps a little damp, or wet, or gross, in some way. So if so many people are getting their handshake wrong - and of course let's face facts, that's a first impression - then maybe we need to revisit all of this world of common sense. And so that's what drove the initial planning behind this book.

**Kelsey Howarth:** What is covered in What's Up With Your Handshake?

**Mark Jeffries:** What I tried to do with the book is take people through what we all go through all the time. So kind of our entire day, our entire week, our entire year, and go through all of the opportunities that we are faced with and how to take advantage of each and every one. So the book looks at some of the, what I call the Soft Skills tool box. Things like how we talk, our image, the language we use, the words we that come out, how we look, how we appear to others, how to control perception, how to manipulate it somewhat. Then I go from there into great networking ideas. Little things like how to follow up once you've met someone to ensure that you've really put yourself on the radar. That they remember you and that you build up what I call payback credits. All that's in the book. And then I go into the power of language, and specifically the words, the sentence structure, how to spin things in a positive way without people thinking you're a spinning politician. And then I go from there into some great ideas on boardroom etiquette, and also techniquette - the etiquette of technology - crucially important stuff. And then how to leverage on network, how to deliver a great elevator pitch, and how to constantly make sure that you're always ahead of everybody else. So at any point you can kind of open that book, pick a chapter. Not even a chapter: pick a page, and there will be an idea in there. I like to think of it as a tool box and people can just pick and choose as they will.

**Kelsey Howarth:** How can people self assess whether their Soft Skills might need a little tune up?

**Mark Jeffries:** I think this is probably one of the toughest areas. I mean, obviously, this is why so many companies hire me. They bring me into assess them. And that's great. And long may that continue. But I think that, assessing yourself, you have to ask yourself, How fast is your network growing? Are a great networker? Are you building up new contacts all the time? And when you meet people do they call you up and invite you to be part of something else? If you are out there networking and you're building a base of new contacts you're building your personal brand. And this is a crucial area for your own development because the amount of people who know who you are and know how good you are at doing whatever it is you do, that is your personal brand. And you owe it to yourself to keep growing that all the time.

**Kelsey Howarth:** You mentioned first impressions. They're critical. What are the common mistakes people make when meeting someone for the first time?

**Mark Jeffries:** I think it brings us back to the title of the book. The handshake is very often how people first meet. The handshake on it's own is a whole science, and you've got to get that thing right. For example, the ideal duration of a handshake? It's two seconds. It's not more than two seconds. I'm talking generally. I know there are big cultural differences. But when someone holds your hand and doesn't let go, even though you have clearly let go. You've gone floppy. You're done. And they're still squeezing tight, that person is saying, as part of a first impression, I shake hands my way. This is how I do business. It's all about me. Now that's not a great first impression to make. Also, watch their eyes. If you shake hands with someone and their eyes drop at the instant that that moment happens, they're saying, I'm not worthy of you. They're saying, I shouldn't be in this situation. I don't feel strong or confident in this situation. And as a result I can't retain or maintain eye contact with you. So that's another big flaw in a first impression. And when people want to dominate with their words we all have things we want to say. It's very important. We've built up to this moment. Perhaps meeting a very senior person, or brand new client. We've got things to say. But the most important thing you can do in terms of a first impression is to listen because the more you listen and the more data and information you get off that other person. And then when you finally do open your mouth what you say is wholly relevant and it matters. I mean there's nothing worse than those zero empathy conversations where you say one thing and then they say something which is wholly unattached to it. For example you go, "Oh my god, the road was so icy that my car slid out of control. I thought I was going to crash it." And their response is, "Do you know what? I must record Lost tonight." That is a zero empathy conversation. And frankly, that's the worst first impression you can make.

**Kelsey Howarth:** Are there any public figures that you admire in terms of their soft skills?

**Mark Jeffries:** Well, you see, that's the thing. Soft skills is a very personal, very intimate thing. It's normally between one or two people. And as a result you can't observe it on a grand stage. What you can observe out there in terms of the personalities and the players are people who often make headlines for one reason or another. And of course, at the moment, and over the remainder of 2008, we'll be talking about politics a lot. And politicians have a great way of displaying their connection with people. Now we can learn off politicians. We can learn off these public figures, especially when you're selling a concept or an idea because it sounds good. It feels good. And again, that's the whole secret of soft skills.

**Kelsey Howarth:** In May, you'll be the host of Cognos Forum in Las Vegas for the third year running. What do you hope to share with the audience there?

**Mark Jeffries:** Well, Forum is always great fun. And what I adore about it, especially as you pointed out, coming back year after year, is seeing the same familiar faces. And so it's tough. It's tough on me, because I've got to come up with new stuff all the time. And that's one of the great things about what I do. I'm always learning, always seeing new approaches, new angles, hearing new stories. And so what I'll be doing, once again, is bringing to the Forum audience in Vegas some great lessons in terms of how they can improve and fine tune

the way they communicate. Because in the end if they can communicate a brilliant idea in the best possible way, they'll sell it. And it always upsets me when there may be a great inventor, or a fabulous scientist, or a spectacular idea of some sort flying out there. But without the communication behind it, or behind the person it just sinks away. So I always like to bring to the Forum crowd, wherever we do the event, lots of ideas on how they can communicate their brilliance and make them even more successful.

(09:20)

**Kelsey Howarth:** For more information on Cognos Forum please visit [Cognos dot com slash Cognos Forum](http://Cognos.com/CognosForum). For more information on how you can get Mark at your next event please visit [Mark Jeffries dot com](http://MarkJeffries.com).

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(10:15)

**Station ID:** Interviews, insights and opinions on performance management. You're listening to BI Radio.

(10:31)

**Don Campbell:** Hi. I'm Don Campbell, Chief Technology Officer.

**Stephan Jou:** I'm Stephan Jou, Technical Architect.

**Andrew Kowal:** I'm Andrew Kowal.

**Anastasia Valentine:** And I'm Anastasia Valentine.

**Don Campbell:** So we all attend a lot of conferences during the year, and some of them are trade shows directed at small numbers of people. But occasionally we get these massive ones with lots of folks in them, lots of activity. Wall to wall people, and booths, and activity going on all over the place. How do we actually survive these things? And how do we make sense out of them and actually get some value out of going to these things.

**Andrew Kowal:** Well the number one rule, especially if you're actually at a booth working the show. If you're a booth bunny, or whatever you call it, comfortable shoes. That's the most important thing if you're on your feet all day.

**Anastasia Valentine:** I agree. From the female perspective it's got to be comfortable shoes.

**Andrew Kowal:** So for those people out there that may manage the shows, and set up the shows, pay the extra money to the people who are setting it up for extra padding under it because they actually put the carpets down for every show and they rip it right up to the concrete in most of these installations. So pay the extra money for the better padding. It's completely worth it. It sounds ridiculous, but it's very true.

**Stephan Jou:** I find really good planning helps too. A lot of times you can get the schedules in advance. And just even the night before, try to plan out your day and figure out where you're going to be and where you need to be. That helps a lot so that you're not just running around frantically trying to make sure you see all the people you need to see.

**Anastasia Valentine:** Divide and conquer too. I mean if you've got your teammates make sure that you do get coverage and compare notes afterwards just so you're not losing any of the information that's being gathered by your teammates.

**Don Campbell:** Geographically things can be very dispersed where you're trying to go to a session at one end and then run to the lunch which is at the other end.

**Anastasia Valentine:** Especially in Vegas.

**Don Campbell:** Back and forth. You really need Segways or something like that.

**Andrew Kowal:** I think it's important, if you are setting up a schedule, to make sure that, I mean, if you are actually working a show again as opposed to just attending it. Attending it is a wonderful feeling. You're just going up, for me anyway, because I do so many of these shows as someone who has to work it. To actually attend is, for me, it's almost a break. But when you're actually working a show take the time to actually go around, and look around, and learn. And put that as part of the schedule, as part of the requirement to do that.

**Anastasia Valentine:** I think that when you're at a show the people who are working the show - and we've been on both sides of the fence - the people who are working on the show are waiting for you to come up, ask questions. I mean, don't be afraid. Don't worry about approaching people. Don't hold back. Ask the questions that you need answered. And if you can get contacts and develop relationships, make sure that's your touch point or jumping off point to creating those and fostering those relationships moving forward.

**Andrew Kowal:** That's right. Brush your teeth. Floss. Make sure you have mints. No garlic. Never sit down. Always look people in the eye. And make sure that you engage people with questions. Pull them in with questions.

**Anastasia Valentine:** Make sure you get the swag.

**Andrew Kowal:** Get the swag! The swag is the most important thing.

**Don Campbell:** That's changed a lot though. There used to be the events where you just walked by with a great big bag and you just kind of scoop it off the table as you went from booth from booth.

**Anastasia Valentine:** Smart booths don't do that any more.

**Don Campbell:** They don't do that quite so freely, do they?

**Anastasia Valentine:** They do that after the presentation, after you've had the conversation. And if you're a qualified person then you might get something extra.

**Andrew Kowal:** Force you to go through all the demo stations and get the silly stamps, the PowerPoint stamps and go through that before they give you something of value.

**Stephan Jou:** You know what has improved though? The food. There's no problem staying hydrated because they'll strategically place coffee and water stations, and fruit, and candy bars, and anything. Just make sure you have enough energy to move from one area of the conference to the other. So, yeah, bring a lot of pockets that you would normally reserve for the swag and fill them up with granola bars.

**Don Campbell:** Navigation can be difficult. I know that some of the events have it very rectilinear and you can go across and then up and down or whatever you have to do to make total coverage. That's not so bad. But the ones that aren't quite like that, you'll end up getting lost. And you're cycling back and saying, "Wait, I've seen this booth before." And you're not sure if you've missed other booths. How do you manage that? I've actually seen a few conferences now giving out little GPS devices that you can use while you're on the floor there in order to try and find the places you need to get to, because otherwise it's a bit of zoo.

**Andrew Kowal:** The biggest show I was ever at was at Frankfurt about five or ten years ago. About in that range. The Frankfurter Buchmesse. The Book Fair. And it was in multiple buildings. It was almost like a campus and very, very busy in some of the different rooms. Like one would be all multimedia. One would be all Internet related. And one would be all print books, and I wanted to do a very fast tour to see everything. It took forever. And at one point I was sort of cramming through the crowd trying to get because I wanted to do that rectilinear. I'm going down this one. Taking a left. Going like I was shopping for groceries. Just back and forth making sure I catch everything. And I pushed through this group of German people and some of them were shouting at me in German thinking I was being rude. And I was like I gotta get through. I didn't realize they were interviewing Helmut Kohl, who at the time was the Chancellor. And I burst through this circle of basically Secret Service guys into the middle of the TV interview with Helmut Kohl right in front of me.

**Anastasia Valentine:** That's bad form Andrew.

**Andrew Kowal:** It is very bad form. And all of a sudden some very large, very annoyed Secret Service type is grabbing me by the back of my shirt and yanked me out of the camera view. So somewhere, someone, maybe even here listening, has actually seen me poking my head out on German national television. So anyway. Listen to the Germans, I guess is the advice.

**Anastasia Valentine:** One thing I would love to see is to just complete abolishment of business cards because I would love some kind of electronic way, PDA to PDA. Let's communicate our information so that I don't have to bring all these little pieces of paper back.

**Stephan Jou:** We should probably do what the Japanese do where they exchange contact information via a handshake. So they have electronic devices there. They use the capacitance of the hands. You make physical flesh to flesh contact via a handshake, and your e-cards get exchanged. That's the future.

**Anastasia Valentine:** That's the way we should go.

**Don Campbell:** So do you actually need to be present these days, though? There's more and more conferences happening online in some virtual worlds where you can still get the demos, and still see what you need to see from a business perspective, and chat with other patrons, etc. But you don't have to physically do the travel.

**Anastasia Valentine:** I think you've got to do the due diligence. See if the conferences you're going to are those things available elsewhere? In some cases you can even get more one on one tailored view where you can speak more freely, as opposed to be one of the crowd watching a demo in person with the company as opposed to going to their event. I wouldn't say that's the way to do it for everything. But certainly make sure that you're getting value for your money, and your travel, and your time.

**Stephan Jou:** You raise a good point though. Whether virtual or real there's a lot of value, not just in the scheduled events, but in all the networking, sort of off schedule event conversations that happen in the hallways outside the main speaking events. That's where a lot of the business connections are made and a lot of conversations happen.

**Andrew Kowal:** Well for example, I was at a show again, Intermedia, or something of that nature. And this woman came up to the booth and starting talking to us about this sort of media stuff. And this woman had an incredibly, old woman, incredibly high pitched voice. And I said to her, I recognize your voice from somewhere. Where do I know your voice from? And she said, "Oh, I'm Smurfette." So Smurfette was walking around as multi media sort of thing as a voice talent. And so there you go! So how in the world, virtually, would I have almost been incarcerated by the German federal prison system and met Smurfette if I had done that online?

**Don Campbell:** And they're also a great milestone activity to have for the people producing products. That's when they target all their products to show up. So you're going to see the latest and greatest thing that might not have been available even the week before. And that's what helps to make them exciting. People, and products, and interaction, and all new technology to try and make it all work well. So enjoy your conference experience while you can cause some day they may all be online. Talk to you next time.

**Andrew Kowal:** Wear comfortable shoes!

(18:45)

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(19:26)

**Station ID:** Insights on Performance Management from the people who shape the industry.

(19:40)

**Kelsey Howarth:** Hi. I'm Kelsey Howarth. Don Tapscott is one of the world's leading authorities on business strategy, and Founder and Chairman of international think tank New Paradigm. Don's clients include top executives of many of the world's largest corporations and government leaders from many countries. Don is also the author of eleven widely read books about information technology including Paradigm Shift, Growing Up Digital, and The Naked Corporation. His most recent book, Wikinomics, How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything, is an international best seller in twenty languages. Here, he joins me to discuss Wikinomics, raw self organization, and what he'll share in his upcoming key note address at Cognos Forum in May.

(20:37)

**Kelsey Howarth:** You've written that a perfect storm of change is brewing under global business, driven by four broad forces. Web 2.0. The coming of age of the net generation. A social revolution in which mass collaboration is superseding information as the focus of the Web. And then an economic revolution. How should companies be reinventing themselves to take advantage of the opportunities this is bringing?



**Don Tapscott:** I'll just give you one. It's probably the simplest. And that's something we call the Wiki Workplace. Today in our companies we have all these really primitive technologies for collaboration. Like electronic mail. The telephone. How do we get to the next generation? Blogs. JAMS. Social networks. Collaborative filtering. RSS feeds. Tags. Telepresence. Digital brain storms. Because it turns out when you do, you get, in some cases, spectacular improvements in performance and in innovation. So the specific answer to your question around this topic, Wiki Workplace, is you can sit down and do what we call a Wiki Workplace Workshop where at the beginning of the day you do some educational stuff explaining what are all these tools. Then you can start to probe, what are the specific opportunities in our company? What are some impediments to moving forward? How would we overcome those impediments? What are the technologies that make sense? So let's get a pilot and a game plan to get going. And every time I've been involved in one of these it's been really quite extraordinary how energized people get. So getting going is not all that complicated.

**Kelsey Howarth:** In Wikinomics you mentioned companies like Google, Mozilla, and IBM, have really encouraged and orchestrated raw self organization to create competitive advantage. How have they done this, and what lessons can other companies learn from their approach?

**Don Tapscott:** See, a lot of companies fear self organization. They fear customers having power, or being able to scrutinize them, and understand what's true value and what isn't. Companies want to protect all of their IT and not place it in the commons. This has been called Commonism. Linux for example. Well, you can sort of understand why they have a point. I mean, if you embrace all this self organization and you place things in the commons, doesn't that undermine the legitimate right of companies to make a profit? I mean, didn't Linux hurt Microsoft? Didn't MP3 hurt the record labels? Didn't Wikipedia hurt Britannica? But what we found in our research is that, no, if you embrace this stuff, it can help you compete and grow, and innovate. So IBM, as you mentioned, rather than fighting Linux, embraced it and gave away hundreds of millions of dollars in software and placed it in the commons. In doing so, they created a platform, Linux, upon which they built a multi-billion dollar business. They saved themselves close to a billion dollars a year in developing and maintaining their own proprietary operating system. They also got to change the dynamics in the computer industry, vis-a-vis, their own competitor. It turns out that sharing intellectual property in harnessing this mass collaboration that exists is not socialism. It's capitalism at its finest. It's a way of growing and competing.

**Kelsey Howarth:** As we move into a recession cycle often companies begin to slash IT budgets. Yet you caution companies against making IT cost cutting part of their strategy. Why?

**Don Tapscott:** Well there may be opportunities to reduce the cost of IT. But that's not a strategy for the use of IT in a business. And there are people who argue that independent of your needs that you should cut your IT budget by say 50% because IT so called doesn't matter. And I disagree with that quite fundamentally. And I think all of our research shows that that's illusory at best, and more likely dangerous. Sure, if you're going to cut IT costs

you need to know overall what your strategy is and trim fat. Don't go yanking out parts of your nervous system, or your vascular system, and so on. So the goal really has to be, how do we move to this new model of the enterprise? What's the role of IT in achieving that? What kind of technology do we need? How do we migrate our legacy from the old to the new? And within that framework, are there opportunities to exploit these new publically available technologies, virtualization, new standards-based architectures, Web services, and so on, to move away from the traditional more expensive and costly proprietary IT infrastructures?

**Kelsey Howarth:** In May you're going to join us in Las Vegas for Cognos Forum. As a keynote speaker at the event, what do you hope to convey to the audience?

**Don Tapscott:** Well I got assigned a great challenge. The theme of the whole conference is acceleration. And day three is accelerating imagination. So I get the real juicy topic, if you ask me, and I'll be talking about these kinds of ideas, that the role of the new Web, and the new generation of young people who are the kind of imagination generation coming into the workforce, into the marketplace, and how we can harness their thinking, their capability, and their new culture to move towards a culture where imagineering takes place, orders of magnitude, faster than it does today? And I'll be talking about the challenge of leadership too because I think that leadership is changing fundamentally. And it's becoming much more democratized, that people throughout organizations now can provide leadership, given this new age of sort of collective intelligence. So these are some of the ideas I'll be picking up.

**Kelsey Howarth:** For more information on Cognos Forum please visit Cognos dot com slash Cognos Forum. To find out how you can get Don at your next event please visit New Paradigm dot com.

(28:11)

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(28:55)

**Ken Seeley:** Well that's a wrap. I'd like to thank our guests today, Mark Jeffries, our Technology Soup panel of Don Campbell, Anastasia Valentine, Stephan Jou, and Andrew Kowal, and from New Paradigm, Don Tapscott. A special thanks as well to our contributing

producers, Kelsey Howarth and Delaney Turner. Thanks to our producer and audio engineer, Derek Schraner, who composed all of the original music you hear on BI Radio for making us sound so good. A reminder to check us out at Radio Cognos dot com where you can listen to previous shows, download individual segments, and view the transcript of each broadcast. If you have a question or care comment about what you hear on BI Radio send us an email at radio at Cognos dot com. Thanks for listening. I'm Ken Seeley. We'll see you again in about six weeks.

(29:50)

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**Station ID:** Performance management you can listen to. This is BI Radio.

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