

Paul A. Pangaro, Ph.D.

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Paul Pangaro is a technology executive, professor of cybernetics, entrepreneur, and performer. He possesses a rare combination of technical depth, marketing and business acumen, and a passion for designing services and products that serve the cognitive and social needs of human beings.

Education & Application

Paul studied computer science and humanities at MIT, where he made award-winning computer-generated films. He was hired by Nicholas Negroponte to work in what became the MIT Media Lab, inventing visual user interfaces and media applications. To pursue learning theory and research in human-machine interaction, he left the Ph.D. program and relocated to England to earn a Ph.D. in cybernetics and conversation theory at Brunel University with Gordon Pask (pangaro.com/PhD-thesis).

In the 1980s Paul sought practical applications for his research. He founded a company to apply conversational modeling to software in a way that augments individual learning and group collaboration. He designed and coded the user interface of THOUGHTSTICKER, a large-scale training environment funded under contract with the UK Admiralty and US Army (pangaro.com/thoughtsticker). The system transformed hyperlinked content into a threaded conversation based on an individual's learning style and interaction history. THOUGHTSTICKER was a precursor to his more recent efforts to personalize search and web browsing (pangaro.com/thoughtshuffler).

In the 1990s Paul extended his skill as software designer to that of strategic planner, through a long-term relationship with DuPont and through projects with enterprises such as Lotus Development Corp. In these engagements he constructed models of value creation in the supply chain and proposed systems to support innovation in a networked economy (pangaro.com/LILO).

Entrepreneur & Executive

When the Internet boom arrived, Paul relocated to Silicon Valley. As CTO of startups and strategy consultant to a range of businesses, he created product roadmaps, articulated market positioning and value propositions, conducted due-diligence analyses, and developed and presented business plans to venture capitalists.

Paul was recruited into Sun Microsystems to be responsible for the company's web presence for software developers. He directed the first integration of all developer web sites to common processes and information architecture, including 100,000 pages at java.sun.com (pangaro.com/javamap). He segmented the market to target developers of high value to Sun's bottom line and grow the Java community as a means to increase Sun's bottom line. He created new language that articulated a market position that only Sun could occupy and that illuminated a direction for organizational change (pangaro.com/littlegreybook.pdf).

Because of his technical background and ability to structure complex problems, Paul's role grew to include responsibility for the outreach strategy to Sun's developer communities. He established two-way conversations and built campaigns that delineated Sun's technological and market advantages to developers and entrepreneurs, engendering their loyalty (pangaro.com/pdf-sun). His work was rewarded with his appointment as Distinguished Market Strategist, one of four individuals recognized for contributions parallel to those of Distinguished Engineer (pangaro.com/the-cybernetician.pdf).

Design & Innovation

In his own software prototyping, lectures, and writings, Paul continues to focus on the cognitive and social needs of human beings. He makes the case that a business that co-evolves with customers through quantifiable conversations will achieve maximum effectiveness and longevity (pangaro.com/sun-co-evo). Paul is a frequent speaker at technical and marketing forums, and teaches a course on cybernetics and design at Stanford University in Terry Winograd's Human-Computer Interface program (pangaro.com/stanford). He collaborated with Hugh Dubberly and Nathan Felde on the Innovation Poster for Alberta College of Art and Design (dubberly.com/innovation.html).

Always seeking commercial applications for his ideas and prototypes, Paul became founding CTO of Snap.com, working with Bill Gross's Idealab team developing alternative search experiences. Responsible for the product roadmap and evangelism, Paul drove company mission, product definition, and organizational design processes, while supporting due-diligence and venture funding (snap.com). A summary of Paul's approach to product design and user experience can be found at pangaro.com/ue. His views on internet search, ecommerce, and requirements for understanding online content may be found at pangaro.com/search.

Performer & Participant

Paul performed in college and community theatre (with leads in Shakespeare, Wilde, Bernard Shaw, Genet) and in cabaret and musical theatre (with leads in Kiss Me Kate and Camelot). He is member of the board of San Francisco's Artship Dance/Theater.