

Accelerating Digital Transformation

An Interview with Matt Carter, Chief Executive Officer, Aryaka

EDITORS' NOTE Matt Carter is a cloud and technology industry veteran, leading Aryaka's long-term market strategy and day-to-day operations, while guiding the company's vision for an increasingly connected world. Prior to this role, he served as President and CEO of Inteliquent Inc., a publicly-traded provider of cloud-based networking services for global enterprises, which was successfully acquired by GCTR, a Chicago based PE firm. Carter



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previously held a series of executive positions with Sprint Corporation including serving as President of the Sprint Enterprise Solutions business that provided a diversified portfolio of communication platforms to companies in over 165 countries globally. He also served as President of Boost Mobile, a leading provider of no contract wireless services. Carter earned his master's degree in general management from the Harvard Business School and his bachelor's degree from Northwestern University.

COMPANY BRIEF Aryaka, (aryaka.com) the Cloud-First WAN company, brings agility and simplicity to consuming the WAN-as-a-service. An optimized global network and innovative technology stack delivers an industry-leading managed SD-WAN service and sets the standard for application performance. Aryaka's SmartServices offers connectivity, application acceleration, security, cloud networking and insights, leveraging global orchestration and provisioning. The company's customers include hundreds of global enterprises including several in the Fortune 100.

What excited you about the opportunity to lead Aryaka?

It was simply that Aryaka competes in a category that is disrupting existing legacy networks. That means that while enterprises today can procure private networks from the incumbent service providers, Aryaka has pioneered a new network architecture that was purposely built for cloud-based applications. The market for this is growing exponentially as enterprises go through digital transformation. It was exciting to work with this new

technology platform that is truly disrupting existing technologies and making those obsolete.

The excitement was the opportunity to help Aryaka to continue to pioneer and move forward with this disruptive technology that's helping enterprises who are going through the natural transition into a cloud-based world.

How is Aryaka differentiated in the industry?

Most technology companies spend a lot of time talking about the product. As a marketer, I like to come at it from a point of view of understanding customers' needs and how we can fulfill them. This is a very different disposition that requires going in and talking to the CIO or the CPO about the business needs that they have. You have to have the emotional intelligence to work with these people who are sitting in these jobs and trying to help their companies navigate this uncharted path around digital transformation.

Part of our approach is to look at needs from the point of view of the CIO or the CPO qualitatively and understand that most of them have to work with a number of different vendors to help with digital transformation and connectivity. What makes us different and better is that with Aryaka you can work with a single vendor who can help you provide connectivity anywhere around the world to help accelerate digital transformation. That is a solid value proposition that solves a true pain point. It reduces complexity for the CIO or CPO and it has resonated with them that we are different, better, and special vis-a-vis others in the marketplace.

Is Aryaka's main focus on large, global enterprises?

Our sweet spot tends to be the mid-market global enterprise within certain sectors. We do extraordinarily well with manufacturing firms, technology companies, banks and financial services companies, and retail. These enterprises have operations in multiple locations around the world and they need to have world-class connectivity to allow their enterprises to interact with their critical cloud-based applications. We can provide the underpinning network for cloud-based applications that can be accessed anywhere around the world. We handle that from end-to-end.

We provide the connectivity that enhances the end-user experience around those applications. If you're using applications such as Microsoft 365 or Salesforce, you want all the people in your company to have the same experience whether they're in the Hinterland's of Africa, in the mountains of China or someplace in North Carolina. They all need to be able to communicate and have access to your data and we provide that underpinning cloud-based network that allows those applications to be accessible for their end-users.

How critical has it been for Aryaka to build a diverse and inclusive workforce?

Thirty-four percent of my direct reports are women. Around 85 percent of the senior leadership team are either people of color or women. Our board also has more than 50 percent people of color, so we have a very diverse organization throughout Aryaka.

This is important because it brings in different points of views. We're very different than most Silicon Valley companies in that we have women in key roles, and we have an active African American CEO. I think this has actually helped us to become a better company.

It's also a great recruiting tool for us because the talent pool of great women and people of color that is out there are looking to be part of an environment that is inclusive and where they feel they can bring their authentic self to the company. This has been a winner for us in terms of our ability to be able to attract world-class talent into the organization.

How important is it for leading companies today to be purpose-driven?

It's critical. We are a global company, so we look at ourselves as a global citizen. As part of our corporate responsibility program, we have recently partnered with ChildFund, a global organization helping children around the world who live in distressed conditions to get access to technology to enable them to improve their lives. Many of our employees are engaged and focused around this initiative. I find that our employees want to be here because they feel like we're about more than just revenues and profits. We have a bigger purpose. People want to work at purposeful, mission-driven, value-driven organizations that want to do good in the world. ●