




IN THE MEDIA

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a warehouse interior. It shows a wooden pallet rack with a window, and a blurred floor and ceiling. A large, diagonal orange graphic element cuts across the lower half of the image.

**Doing business with Danny Ing
of Cin7: ‘Telling the difference
between the noise and
what is for real’**

**“ We looked at what we saw coming -
inexpensive mobile data, smartphones, multiple
sales channels, e-commerce, third-party logistics
- and asked, what do we see happening in four to
five years time and how are people going to
change because of it? ”**



Name: Danny Ing

Title: Founder and Head of Product, Cin7

Twitter handle: Truth be known, I haven't quite gotten the hang of social media.

How long have you been in your current role?

I started the original internet development company, Datum Connect on February 14, 2002. We were a bunch of dudes, IT geeks and salesmen, so it took four years for us to realise that was Valentine's Day. Cin7 grew out of that. People started were using it in 2012, but we didn't officially launch until 2013.

What business technology issue is your role focusing on?

The idea is connected inventory. Before starting Cin7, we saw first-hand how e-commerce was changing how our customers needed to operate: not only were they selling online, they also had retail stores and wholesale customers, and we saw the need for their inventory to be connected under one system. Back in the day, if you were a wholesaler, you did wholesale; if you were a retailer, you did retail, and if you sold online you sold online. These days you could be a wholesaler that also sells online, and you may have an outlet store. This omnichannel was the disruption.

What are your interests away from work?

I'm sort of a geek by nature. I once figured out that there were things outside my logical brain - like people were dancing and having fun - which didn't quite make sense to me. I then outsmarted myself and made a logical decision to be illogical. So I got interested in the business of fashion. I was watching a fashion show and I would think "why would anyone wear that?" and decided I had to figure it out. So, I decided one year I'd go to Fashion

Week in New York. I didn't know it was a big deal at the time. I joined a photographer and went with her to New York and spent 10 weeks there as a photographer's assistant. It was just interesting really trying to make it make sense for me. I'm just intrigued by how different industries work. My only hobby at the moment is Pokemon-hunting with my son. And I do yoga and calisthenics.

**What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?**

When I graduated after studying marketing and accounting at the University of Waikato, I went to my market research lecturer, Scott Koslow, and said “Now that I have my degree, what do I do with it?”

He said, “Do what you’d do for free, and if you make money you’ll be successful.” I didn’t understand at the time, but after a year out in the workforce, I thought that had to be a lot better than what I was doing, and I decided to follow his advice. It wasn’t about passion, it was about the things that people just do anyway, what’s in their nature to do, and finding which one of those things is going to make you money. So back then, I just fiddled with computers a lot, taught myself how to build computers, websites, and I thought I’ll just get into IT. Why not? I do it anyway.

Professionally, who do you admire most?

I would say Rod Drury, currently. He’s done some amazing things with Xero, really. He championed the idea of accounting as an online industry. I’m not saying other people weren’t doing it, but he brought it to the forefront in New Zealand. And he’s for real, and because I’ve met him and we’re in the same ecosystem, he’s made a real impression on me.

How long have you been working in your field? How did you get into your role?

I graduated from the University of Waikato in 1997. Back then the business school had better facilities than the computing school so we had better systems and I committed myself to learn all about building websites, working with computers, programming. About five years later, I started Datum Connect.

If you weren't working in your field, What would you be doing?

I’m not 100 per cent sure. I’ve thought about it. I used to do martial arts, and at one time I imagined opening a chain of martial arts studios. I don’t think I’d do that. I think it would still be in technology, but the project would be based around looking for a problem to solve using technology.



smartphones, multiple sales channels, e-commerce, third-party logistics - and asked, what do we see happening in four to five years time and how are people going to change because of it?

Preparing to disrupt is an educated guess. The thing about IT is telling the difference between the noise and what is for real. So, it's about looking at the very niche technologies and figuring out if that's something that will

Can you share one key pointer for keeping abreast of business technology trends?

I read a fair bit, but ultimately you stay abreast by meeting customers and people in other companies similar to yours. When we were building Cin7, I probably spent half my time with the customers to find out what they needed, how they were already working, what kind of systems they had in place. Being out in the ecosystem and talking to other SaaS companies, that's how I do it. You do read things, but sometimes reading doesn't give you enough information.

Prepare to disrupt and be the disruptor - not the disrupted. How did you apply this insight to your organisation, or with a customer you have worked with?

Disruption mainly comes from two things. One is the technology, the other is the customer. So, being disruptive isn't just about the technology itself, but about how people will act differently because of the technology. We looked at what we saw coming - inexpensive mobile data,

be the norm in a few years. Look at online streaming. YouTube was a little niche when Google bought it. It didn't make sense that streaming would become so massive, but now it is. I have two sons, and they don't watch any TV. For the younger generation it's all streaming.