

The Road Less Traveled Became My Superhighway

I took a different route than a lot of my VMware colleagues. While I have always had a keen interest in everything tech, after high school I decided to find out what the “real world” was like and what the ultimate end users of products really thought about what companies were selling.

I took a job in IT customer support at a high-tech firm. The experience shaped my outlook in a number of ways. I discovered it was often the technology, not the customer, that was “at fault.” I was typically stuck trying to remedy issues that should not have happened from the start. Yet the technology itself was amazing and could do wonders to solve customer problems. I saw it as a strange catch-22.

After a few years of honing my skills helping customers, I attended college. There I took a class that resonated with me unlike any other. I learned how to design software that solves user challenges in a *natural* way, the way a human expects software to work, *without* any drawbacks. This was such an eye opener since—based on my work experience—I thought technology and the human/user experience were at odds. I was excited that I could potentially apply my “view” of how technology should work to my career. And then just like that, VMware came into my life.

When I joined VMware, I was one of the few colleagues to have a customer support background. That fact has helped me bring a holistic view to the work my colleagues and I do—I am always asking what would the customer think. For instance, is the software easy to use? Does it work the way they want it to work? Is the solution forcing the end user to do something “unnatural,” rather than the way they like doing things?

I soon discovered this perspective is important in today’s cloud era. In the old days, end users had only “take it or leave it” options and that was it. Today, thanks to easy-to-use, seamless consumer devices, end users have a different mindset. Research has shown that productivity typically goes *down* dramatically if new corporate tech does not match the simple nature of consumer solutions. Even proprietary solutions created for a specific, often unique, task need to offer a positive user experience. Otherwise usage rates are diminished, with the greater risk of people avoiding the technology altogether.

It’s very tempting when designing machine learning and automation solutions to simply focus on the technology. But my background—combined with my drive to deliver an ideal experience and VMware’s matching corporate philosophy—allows me to help deliver elegant answers to customer issues, answers that customers will immediately use, right out of the box.