

Bob Barker

Founder
20/20 Outlook LLC



Veteran technology executive Bob Barker's latest venture is all about giving back.

After 20 years of business development at six different technology companies, plus a stint at a venture capital firm where he specialized in tech investments, Barker is now taking all that he learned along the way and providing it to entrepreneurs and would-be tech execs.

In February, Barker launched 20/20 Outlook LLC, a technology consulting firm. The goal is to use his industry experience to help small and medium business reach their full potential by defining appropriate exist strategies based on market positioning.

Market positioning is something Barker knows plenty about. His most recent job was as chief marketing officer for Austin-based Infoglide Software Corp. Since 1989, he also held business development and marketing positions at companies such as Michigan-based Compuware Corp., Massachusetts-based Anysoft Inc. and Dallas-based Critical Devices Inc. Barker has also led several acquisitions for software companies, including a \$200 million deal.

All of that experience has put Barker in an unusual position to pass along the fruits of his journey. But at 20/20 Outlook, Barker is most busy preaching partnership. It's not enough to just team up with another tech company to generate business, he said. Companies need to make sure the partnerships are the right fit and allow the type of exit strategy sought.

"I know the constraints that startups work under," he said. "but I've been able to put together partnerships to form new lines of business that created multimillion-dollars' worth of revenue."

■ Interview by Christopher Calnan

What's your worst habit?

It's probably spending too much time thinking about things I can't control, like politics.

When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I was going to be a scientist. A friend of mine used to launch rockets with me. I was a little bit of a nerd, I guess.

When people ask what you do for a living, what do you tell them?

I tell them I help CEOs grow their businesses. That's really what I like to do.

What are you most afraid of?

I'm afraid of becoming a legend in my own mind, taking myself too seriously.

Continued

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What was the greatest invention of the last 50 years?

Semiconductors and the Internet because, combined, they made so many other inventions possible.

What are the three verbs that best describe what you do?

Connect, analyze and execute.

What's on your iPod?

Madeleine Peyroux, George Strait, Taylor Wise and the King's College Choir.

What was your first job?

When I was 11 years old, I started mowing neighbors' lawns.

Where's your favorite place to eat?

It's a tie between Three Forks and Kiko's Tex Mex in Corpus Christi, where I grew up.

Where do you go to get away?

Our place to go is Sonoma, Calif., and overseas it's Paris.

What's your favorite guilty pleasure?

Dark chocolate M&Ms; they're way too good.

What makes you happy?

Hanging out with my family, no question.

What makes you unhappy?

When I find out I didn't listen enough, no matter what the situation.

Who is your mentor?

I draw a lot from a wide circle of friends. But Ray Noorda, who was the CEO of Novell, I probably learned more from him than anyone else in the business.

What's your best character trait?

I'd say my optimism, but like any strength it can also be a weakness.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

What makes Bob Barker good at what he does?

He brings a full suite of knowledge and experience. He is university educated in psychology and has worked in technology companies large and small for decades. He has been involved in startups, both operating and as an investor, plus has managed large organizations in companies with revenues in excess of \$1 billion. In his role with 20/20 outlook, he melds all of these experiences into a process that delivers a clear action path to accomplish the No. 1 goal of all CEOs – enhancing shareholder value. That sets him apart from most.

Mike Shultz, CEO
Infoglide Software Corp.

I've known Bob Barker for many years, and first met him when we were both involved in a startup incubator called Startech Early Ventures in Dallas-Fort Worth. Having worked with him at Startech and knowing him since then, I have learned that Bob is an inquisitive problem solver and a natural coach. In addition, he's a good person who genuinely cares about his clients' needs. And finally, Bob has been able to take his experience and wisdom and consolidate it into a process and methodology that CEOs can use to make better decisions for their company's future.

Haroon Alvi, CEO
Southlake Medical Supplies, Inc.