



THE PATH LESS TRAVELLED – FOLLOW YOUR PASSION.

JAMES MUTTER, LAWYER, CO-FOUNDER, WHITEBOARD LAW



Whiteboard Law

I started focusing on the technology sector in the mid -90s when I joined a large national law firm in Vancouver. Over the span of 25+ years, I have been a lawyer, co-founder of a software company, President of the BC Premier's Technology Council, CEO of a fintech company, Senior Client Partner at the world's largest executive recruiting company and I am now building a virtual law firm.

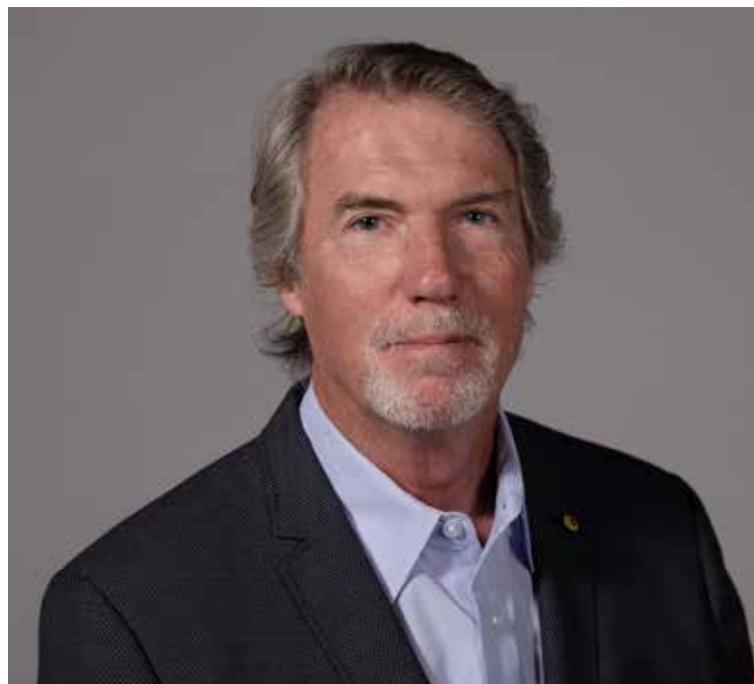
In the current Covid world, the ability to be flexible and adapt is critical. Here are some of the lessons I learned through my unconventional career path.

Educate Yourself. In the mid-'90s, as a lawyer at a large firm breaking into a new practise area, I had to pay close attention to the dynamic change that was happening as the technology sector started to take hold in Vancouver. Without the credibility of understanding the ecosystem, at least at a high level, it was virtually impossible to relate to potential clients. At first, it was a bit like drinking from a fire hose but over time I began to start to piece together how the new companies I met fit into the ecosystem. While I didn't need to understand how their technology worked, I did need to understand how their application or solution was relevant.

Focus on Great People. While I was at the law firm, a key focus was to support clients in a number of non-legal ways so they would continue to grow. This included making introductions or referrals of very talented people to my clients. If I was able to help my clients expand through introductions then we would both benefit. I was never disappointed with the results. Many of the referrals went on to start multiple companies.

Don't Be Afraid to Take Some Risk. In mid-2000, I joined 3 other individuals and co-founded a venture backed technology company (now www.appneta.com). At the time, I had recently become a partner at the law firm, my wife and I had just celebrated our third child being born, and we had just moved to a new house. Even with all of the changes and stress at home, it was the chance of a lifetime which I never regretted jumping into.

The Entrepreneur Mindset and Relentless Execution. For a lawyer, transitioning from an advisor to a co-founder was not easy. My early attempts to do my job centered on building consensus within the senior team. It was about 2-3 months before it became clear the route to success was less of an "ask permission" approach and more of a "beg forgiveness" approach. I learned to focus on understanding the business objectives and using my common sense and experience to determine the next steps and get it done and to get it done quickly. I would make mistakes but I would learn from them and quickly move on.



Adapt Quickly. When our CEO had his second major health issue at 38 I took on the role of interim CEO. This was similar to learning to swim by jumping into the deep end of the pool. My first job was to get up on stage and give the financing pitch at one of the largest venture capital gatherings in the Pacific Northwest. I had to learn the job on the fly and to adapt as circumstances changed. That year we also closed the largest Series A round for a software company in Canada that year.

Do The Right Thing. I was then approached to become the President of the BC Premier's Technology Council (PTC). I am not particularly political, but the idea of a senior role assisting government to adopt technology and to help grow the technology sector appealed to me. I was amazed at the significant roles that government can play in encouraging business growth. Of particular satisfaction was that the PTC was able to get close to 95% of its recommendations enacted provided we focused on "doing the right thing".

Optimize, Optimize, Optimize. As a lawyer I had always looked for ways to make things more efficient and as an entrepreneur I began to understand the intersection between adopting solutions and being part of the process to develop better alternatives. Since 2012 I have been building one of the first fully virtual law firms in North America which was born out of an interest in creating a solid platform to assist both clients and lawyers to optimize the ability to deliver high quality legal services. We are just getting started.

WHITEBOARD LAW CORPORATION
+1-250-869-5992
Unit 3, 6th Floor, 123 Cambie Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 1B8

Whiteboard Law Corporation



whiteboardlaw.com