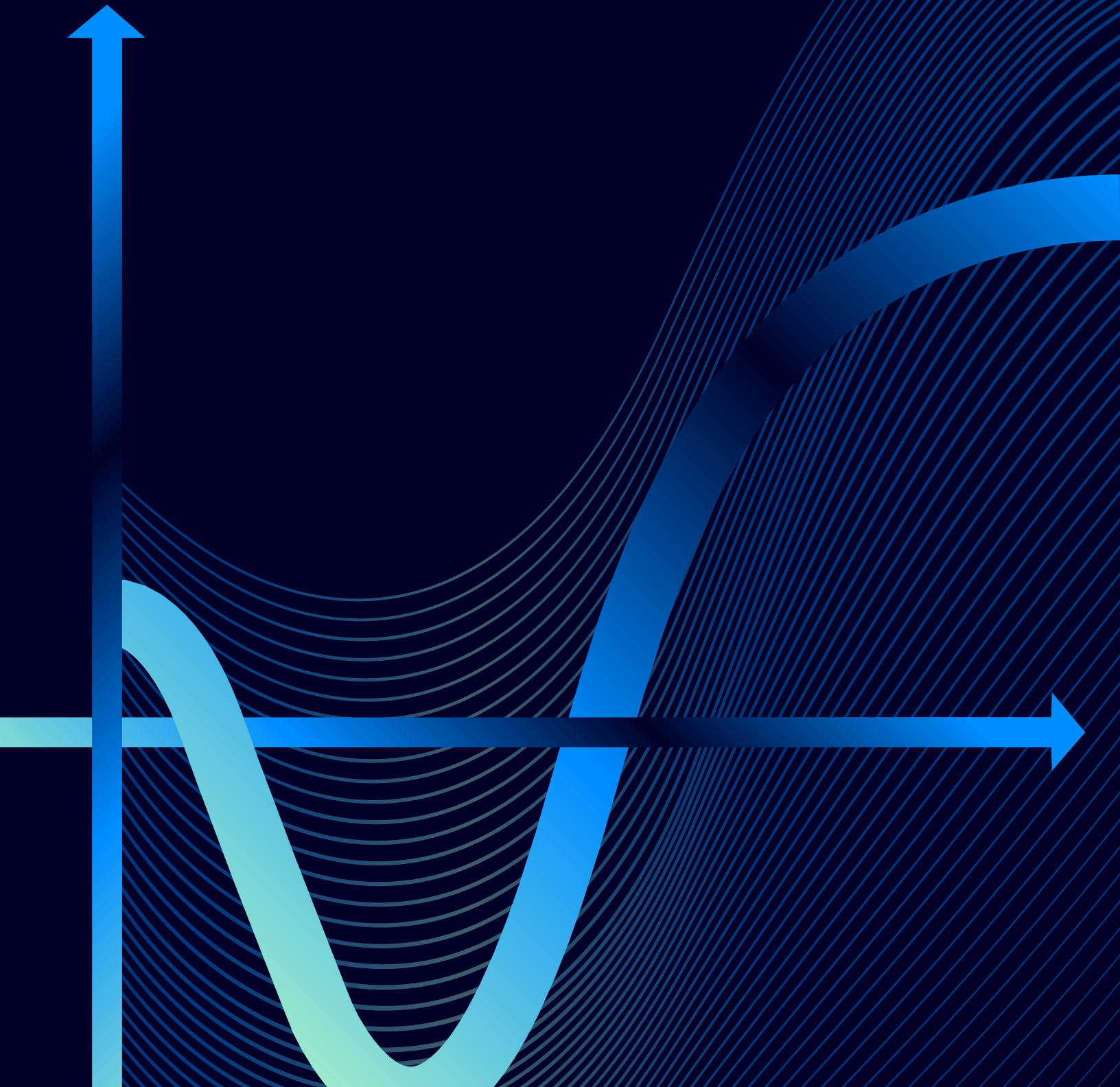


A Decade of Symphony



Brad Levy, CEO

As Symphony celebrates its 10-year anniversary, we reflect on a decade of innovation that has helped reshape the financial services industry. From native cloud to encrypted messaging and distributed workflows, Symphony has pioneered the technologies that are propelling market infrastructure for global finance forward.

At our outset, few realized the broad impact these advancements would have, but the results are now evident. We remain committed to continue working with our clients to build and develop the technology that will drive the next mega-cycle of innovation in global financial services.

There is one constant that has stood out in our journey - communication in all forms is the backbone of our industry, and [people](#) are at the center of it all. With the recognition of the importance of modern communication tools, organizations have identified the criticality of customized, connected and interoperable platforms driving efficient cross-firm workflows.

Today, Symphony is powered by four interconnected platforms: messaging, voice, directory and analytics. Our modular technology enables over 1000 institutions and half a million users to prioritize data security, navigate complex regulatory compliance and optimize business interactions. No small feat, and we're just getting started.

Here is why...The massive disruptive forces coming to a head in the next several years are going to force a choice upon all of us.

It always does.

A clear mission

From the beginning, our focus was to bring secure collaboration to the financial industry. The firm has maintained a relentless focus on developing modern, compliance enabling technology to help institutions capture and leverage their own data in order to manage risk effectively. This is all while maintaining ease of use and flexibility to improve client engagement.

In 2021, [we acquired the trader voice business Cloud9](#), which expanded our offering but did not alter our collective vision. Cloud9 was on a parallel trajectory to Symphony's after its founding in 2014, with a similar focus on revolutionizing financial markets communication in the cloud.

Whether chat or voice, our history of building distributed solutions shows we understood the evolution of the financial technology space early in this cycle. Our goal was to build technology that could be interoperable with other leading platforms - from the earliest fintech startups to the most mature market infrastructures.

Throughout all of this, our mission has remained to empower our customers and users through technology and data. This clarity of vision has guided the development of Symphony's products and services from the start. Consequently, our vision has played a key role in helping shape the evolution of financial services itself in the last decade.

This mindset has allowed us to innovate quickly and often be ahead of the curve. We were the first:

- to provide secure, compliance enabling messaging to the front, middle and back offices,
- to leverage open API's for customized financial workflows,
- to enable digital analysis of voice metadata, and
- most importantly:

the first to build a security infrastructure that helped make Wall Street comfortable with adopting the cloud.

It has taken a decade to see some of these prove out, and we have more to go. But we know that the progress of technological change is often made in small increments with converging technologies. After ten years, we see how these collisions and cumulative steps have propelled the industry forward.

As I shared in [Georgie Dicken's Stratospheric CEOs book](#) about the necessity to "exercise patient urgency... life without the long view can look pretty short. You have to have the three-year vision, the one-year plan and measure hard every ninety days. The attention to three years and ninety days simultaneously is key - long-term vision broken down into shorter-term execution cycles."

We are a **UNIQUE COLLECTIVE**

The success of any organization is always predicated on its people and not its products. When I was named [CEO three years ago](#), I recognized the quality of talent within the organization.

It takes a village - this is a belief I've held for my entire career; I wrote my [first piece](#) on this in 2015. Our success is built on the unique collective of voices and perspectives that we've been able to assemble, from those with deep financial experience to others with sophisticated knowledge about running mission-critical technology.

This unique combination of individual experience and collective skill-sets have driven our cutting-edge initiatives over the years. If there were truly any "magic ingredient" behind Symphony's success, this would be it. As chief executive, I am honored to spearhead such a powerful interplay of leadership across this forward-thinking organization and a highly engaged client base.

All of this explains how we have successfully managed significant industry technical debt, slow moving transformations and a volatile macro backdrop. It's also why the last three years have seen an acceleration of Symphony's "J-Curve" trajectory in our business. Our organization is now benefitting from the slingshot effect that results from significant industry investment.

We've done this by properly identifying the broad developments, both inside and outside the fintech space. In today's fluid economic backdrop, many companies are realizing the stark difference between superficial trends and fundamental shifts in business.

Learning comes from looking backwards, but success does not. Growth comes from continually getting ahead of the next 5-10 years and flexing when opportunities present.

What Lies Ahead

It is now abundantly clear that financial technology's rapid acceleration is not going to slow down.

In January 2022, I explained the historical reasons for this increasing rate-of-change in my piece about the "[Vol Monster](#)."

Suffice it to say that this is the new normal and every company must now adapt. Accelerating market change is why Symphony no longer feels comfortable merely looking at quarterly business projections. Our field, like many others, is in the midst of a generational change.

This includes:

- the generational transition of leadership from Baby Boomers to Gen X to Z,
- the recognition of the [value of data](#) (which I discussed in March 2023), and
- the rise of artificial intelligence and the advent of quantum computing.

There are multiple parallel evolutions happening on various planes simultaneously (think three dimensional Chess wrapped in Go) – from geopolitical, market technology and the market participants themselves. What is emerging before our eyes is an entirely new paradigm.

For the first time in our history, the broader financial services industry realizes it needs new ways to harness technology. In practice, this means applying new:

- toolsets and applications of existing data,
- means of capturing and leveraging data sets, and
- ways of working - both augmenting existing workflows and entirely new processes.

Any company that does not understand this will lose to those who do and will likely fail. Meanwhile, firms who have such tools are already enjoying a "first-mover" or "fast-follower" advantage. This is all playing out right now.

In the end, I predict that there will not only be a massive sea change in our industry - but finance itself will become more embedded as part of the supply chain and fabric of the global economy.

We see what is happening right now. We understand the macro forces driving it. More importantly, we have the team, talent and vision to leverage this moment in time.

We will do this the same way we always have – with a singular focus on solving our client's pressing problems in times of change. We are proud:

- to power our client community to drive their own success,
- of our 10 year history of crafting data-driven solutions, and
- to be at the forefront of a technology revolution that is shaping not only our industry but all industries.

As we head into our next decade or five, Symphony will continue to build on its strengths as an organization. This includes our products, our platforms and most importantly our people. These Syms deliver solutions for our clients based on their individual strengths and needs.

The More Things Change...

What's remarkable is that Symphony has spent 10 years using technology to help change the world – and yet over all that time, very little has changed in our mission or vision.

We still believe that cutting-edge tools in the hands of empowered customers will shape the future of all markets - public and private. And we will continue to drive the interconnections as a leading force for change.

Because in the end, the best way for us to move forward as an industry, as a company, as a team... is [together](#).



SYMPHONY
YEARS

Further reading

Articles I've published

- [Disruptions, Disruptors...and the Disrupted](#), 2024
- [Business Cycles & Opportunity](#), 2023
- [Risk, Transformation & Trust](#), 2022
- [Trident...a weapon of mass solution](#), 2018
- [It's the Community, Stupid](#), 2015

Books that inspire my thinking

- [Age of Revolutions](#), Fareed Zakaria, 2024
- [Stratospheric CEOs](#), Georgie Dickins, 2024
- [Nexus](#), Yuval Noah Harari, 2024
- [The Coming Wave](#), Mustafa Suleyman and Michael Bhaskar, 2023
- [Atlas of AI](#), Kate Crawford, 2021
- [The Changing World Order](#), Ray Dalio, 2021
- [Novacane](#), James Lovelock, 2019
- [Accelerate](#), Nicole Forsgren PhD, Jez Humble and Gene Kim, 2018
- [Sapiens](#), Yuval Noah Harari, 2011
- [The Three Body Problem](#), Liu Cixin, 2008
- [Innovators Dilemma](#), Clayton M Christensen, 1997



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