Marcelo Castanha

NovaProlink

“ I saw an opportunity to develop IT solutions for the legal industry. ”

COUNTRY	Brazil
INDUSTRY	Technology
YEAR SELECTED	2012
PARTNERS	Helcio Maciel , Edson Bastos , Guilherme Kummel , Frederico Araujo
WEBSITE	

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Novaprolink is the much needed link between lawyers and technology. In an effort to efficiently monitor the more than 86 million ongoing litigations in Brazil, Novaprolink has created a series of IT solutions that are a life-saver for any individual in the legal industry. With a proprietary ERP system and search engines, Novaprolink automates the process of finding information that helps its clients win cases and manage their practices. And the opportunity for Novaprolink extends beyond the legal industry: the company is operating in a domestic ERP market expected to reach US$2.9 billion in 2015. Since its founding, Novaprolink has consistently capitalized on the opportunity in this rising industry, securing thousands of clients.

Novaprolink provides individuals in the legal services industry with business intelligence and a number of risk and cost-reducing, customizable IT solutions that automate administrative and case-related tasks. These services fall under three groups: case and office management (CP-Pro), legal resources (databases and search software for legal documents), and client communication (software to develop law firm websites). All of Novaprolink's products are of use to both private and public sector lawyers—in fact, the São Paulo Lawyers Association, the largest lawyer organization in Latin America with over 90,000 members, uses Novaprolink to run its members site, and offers Novaprolink's products as an incentive for more lawyers to join.

Marcelo and Guilherme, engineers from the Brazilian states of Mato Grosso and Paraná, respectively, have always had a passion for computers. As a student of Electrical Engineering at the Federal University of Mato Grosso, Marcelo taught IT classes at night. Guilherme meanwhile chose to move back in with his family soon after receiving his Computer Engineering degree from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro while he began to experiment with creating his own software. The two met in their twenties through Marcelo's sister.

Soon after they met, Marcelo invited Guilherme to join him at the Judicial Court of Mato Grosso, where he was working as the court's Chief Technology Officer. Their colleagues, most of whom were lawyers, began to ask if there was any software that could read and store documents in a digital library. Realizing that the answer was "no," the duo decided to take a stab at the programming challenge and founded Novaprolink in 1993. Marcelo continued to work at the judicial court and split his salary with Guilherme, who started developing a software solution. Just one year later, the product, Informa Legal, received first place in two national contests for Windows software developers. The market, however, was not initially receptive; after months of getting the cold shoulder, they got their lucky break with the Federal Supreme Court, where the representative was sufficiently interested to make a bid. But Marcelo and Guilherme were thinking bigger: they hoped to offer the software for free in exchange for electronic copies of all official legal data from the courts, so that they could digitize and sell their databases to lawyers. With the court representative's approval, the entrepreneurs went to work and brought in computer science guru Hélcio and lawyers Edson and Frederico as partners in the firm. With their input, the product began to develop into an all-encompassing ERP solution for the legal industry, known today as CP-Pro.