

Overcoming the *Fear* ...

Author: Brion Carroll, CEO of Digital Solution Group, LLC

I recall when I was much younger than today, I would engage opportunities with an unbridled sense of what was **to be accomplished**; the challenge was never paired with the danger; the goal was never matched with the disaster that could face me because there was **no experience** of such.

Time passed in life and the *possibility of failure* became coupled with the **desire for success** and it was never more apparent than when I faced my first challenge to dive off a 45' bridge in my hometown of Herkimer, NY.

Butts Bridge was a standing monument to the past days of travel across the West Canada Creek, later replaced by what we referred to as the Green Bridge, supporting two lanes of travel in both directions.

As I stood on the edge of the bridge looking down to the 24' deep water that ran below, I had the rush of what the dive would feel like; gliding through the air in a controlled dive and then bracing my arms above my head as I speared my body through the cool water; making sure to arch my back upon entry so that I curve back to the surface; keeping me from sinking my hands and arms into the murky river bed that would entangle me.

Then I began to contemplate **the negative thoughts** that maybe I would flip over as I approached the water and be **slammed on my back**; the excruciating pain of that form of impact was terrifying.

Maybe my arms wouldn't come together in time or in the right way to break the water and instead my **neck would snap** causing me to be motionless as I *drifted with the water* downstream.

I couldn't really see the water clearly throughout the dive because I wasn't wearing my glasses that gave clarity to items far away, so maybe I would misjudge the timing; the distance; the landing.

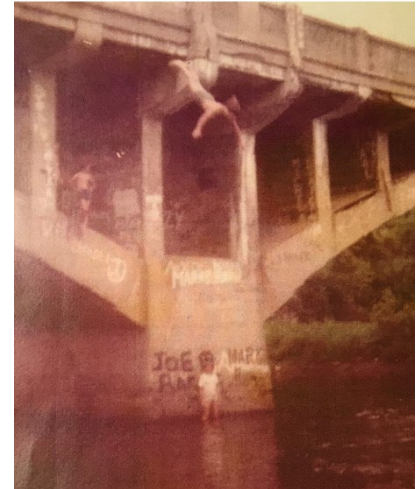
Each thought of **failure** *intertwined* with each thought of **success** making the thirty minutes I stood there perched on the cement railing of the bridge that spanned the river below feel like days. The words of my friends, continued to jeer me on to execute the dive; "Come on ... do it already ... we don't have all day"; none of which were going to take the dive for me by taking on the challenge themselves.

The **fear** of failure had overcome my vision of a positive outcome. Instead of the vision of the dive's flow, I was becoming focused on how I would protect against the most negative of outcomes; losing my life because of a seemingly stupid idea that I could do such a dive at the ripe old age of 12. Why did I think I could do what the older boys were doing. Why did I think that I was skilled enough to take on what only a few of the crew would ever do; diving off Butts Bridge.

Then it hit me ... a moment of *true clarity*. I had **made dives** from lower heights; **I knew how** to perform the launch; **I knew how** to control the flow of the dive; **I knew how** to sense the approach of the water; **I knew how** to hold the wrist of my right hand with my left to break the water; **I knew how** to successfully execute the dive and **I knew what** it felt like to rip entry this form of dive – **so I launched**.

I formed the dive; I felt the air flow around me as I descended toward the water below; I sensed the water approaching as I brought my arms above my head; I secured my hand around my wrist as my hands broke through the water; and I arched my back as my body ripped through the cool water of the river; smooth, wonderful, just as I had planned.

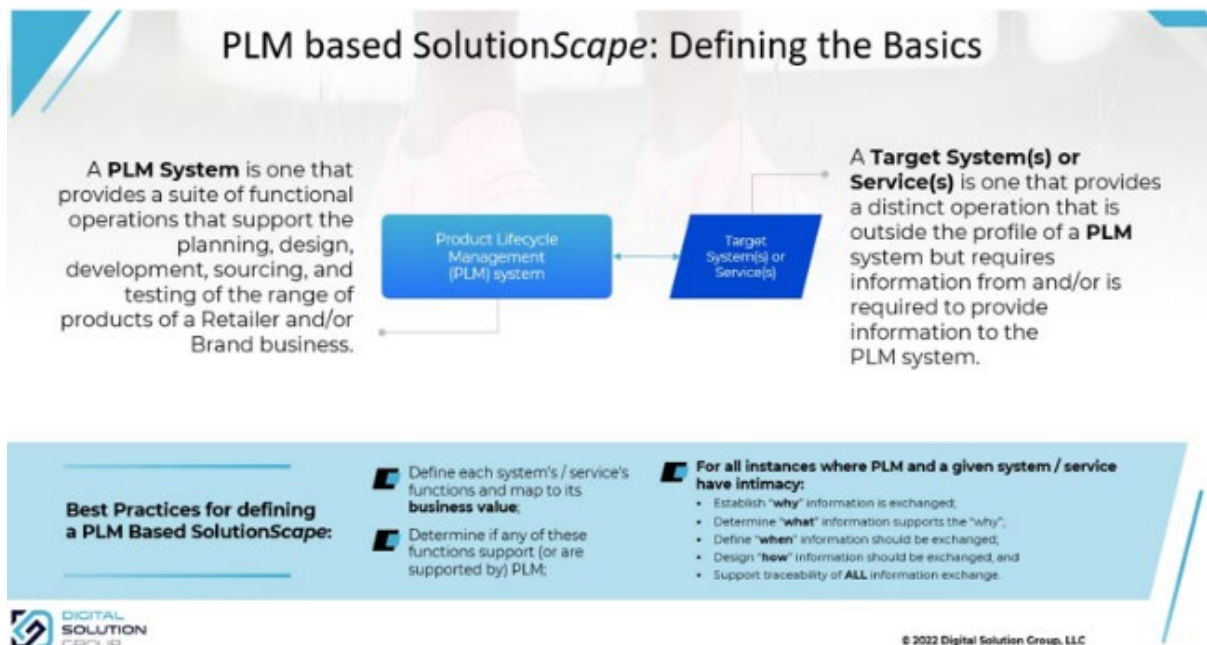
I had overcome my fear by recalling my learnedness of how to dive and by applying it to a greater height above the water.



The reason for this journey into my past is because I often see (or feel) this **fear** abounding when working with brands / retailers that **know the value** that will be achieved by forming integrations between their PLM system and other 3rd party systems / services (SaaS). However, they look at the **distance between systems** and they have an inherent **fear of failure** or **fear** of on-going support or **fear** that the value to the business will never be achieved.

The role of **Digital Solution Group** is to provide the rationale for those facing this decision to **overcome that fear**; replace that doubt with confidence using applied methodologies based on **our learnedness**; and equally important DSG transitions that learnedness to the IT / business leads that integrations are achievable; that on-going support is available; that they can **take the dive** and achieve the *smooth entry in the water* thereby creating the “**digital fluidity**” between PLM and any/all 3rd party systems.

As denoted by the image below, it often comes back to **Defining the Basics**.



- (1) Identifying the **why** sets the framework of what **value** that integration will provide the **business**. This is often defined as reducing data re-entry, eliminating erroneous data during re-entry, streamlining the product lifecycle process to achieve faster time to market, and increasing data visibility between silos systems by exchanging data that would otherwise not be visible.
- (2) This is followed by determining **what** has to be integrated to achieve that value. This could be as basic as passing Assortment Planning system's "slot" information into PLM to direct Designers or passing CAD data from the Design Tools to PLM for broader visibility, or passing Product, Colorway, SKU, and Sourcing data from PLM to ERP or Logistics systems.
- (3) Having defined the *why* and the *what*, DSG works with the brand's / retailer's IT and business leads to define **when** the integration is to be transacted; when information is to be passed between PLM to / from specific 3rd party systems. Examples include triggering an Assortment plan's slots (or placeholders) to be passed to PLM based on the Plan's *status*, or the *status* value of a Product (and its Colorways / size run SKUs) that triggers its integrated transfer to the ERP or Logistics system to enable sample ordering.
- (4) With the why, what, and when being defined (and possibly redefined) the **how** enables execution of the integrated solution or as the saying of ages goes, this is when "the rubber meets the road". Through DSG's technical skills the details of how the integration transaction is defined; what intercept facility will be invoked to trigger the integration based on the predefined "when"; which API (Application Programmers Interface) is to be called to execute the integration; which form of message (be it JSON, HTML, etc.) will be passed to the API; what responses are expected; what action is to be taken based on each response, and so on.
- (5) Once completed; once operational; once its execution is enabling the *digital fluidity* between PLM and a given 3rd party system, DSG then takes on the role of **supporting** the integration. DSG support is expected to include **(5a)** supporting the digital **recording of each transaction** to give on-going visibility of the currently invisible; **(5b)** **evolving** the why, what, when, and how of the integration as the business' requirements evolve; **(5c)** making the necessary **adjustments to the how** of integration as either the PLM or the 3rd part system(s) are transitioned from version to version, and finally, DSG can serve as the **liaison** between our customer and the 3rd party vendor to support issue analysis and eventual resolution.

As with the dive of my youth, that is how DSG provides assistance to its customers to **overcome the fear** of integration; the pensive concern of minimal value from maximum cost; the age-long worry of "*what about tomorrow*". DSG has the **learnedness** and the **skill** to take on the challenge that your business faces in moving from **silos of operation** to a state of **digital fluidity** from **Mind to Market**. To find out how Digital Solution Group can apply the above services (and more) to your business' operations, **contact** Digital Solution Group by clicking on the **email** or **website** link below.

In all things ... stay safe.

Brion Carroll

CEO

Email: brion@digitalsolutiongroup.net

Cell: +1603-566-5382

<http://www.digitalsolutiongroup.com/contact.html>