

MYLA VILLANUEVA's SPEECH  
Women's Business Council  
November 8, 2011  
Choosing Your Partner's: Competition or Collaboration

## Choosing Your Partners: From Competition to Collaboration

**Myla Villanueva**

Founder or Co-Founder  
Novare Technologies, Inc.

MDI

Microwarehouse

Wolfpac

Meridian

Good morning,

My name is Myla Villanueva and I am a serial entrepreneur. I am the CEO of Novare Technologies, my fifth start-up, and which I do not think will be the last.

I have been asked to talk today about Choosing Your Partner's, from Competition to Collaboration.

It is a great topic to talk about especially if you are in technology.

To help me share this, I would like to take you Back To the Future.



Yes, until today, that is how I feel when I see something Insanely Great. The wonderment never stops whenever I discover a promising new technology, and hopefully, I will still feel the same amazement as Marty McFly and Doc Brown at his age.

Our work in technology is a bit like this, always looking back, to put the pieces of the puzzle together, to see around the corners and into the future.

So let me take you a bit into my past.



This is Santa Clara University, in the heart of Silicon Valley, where sunshine

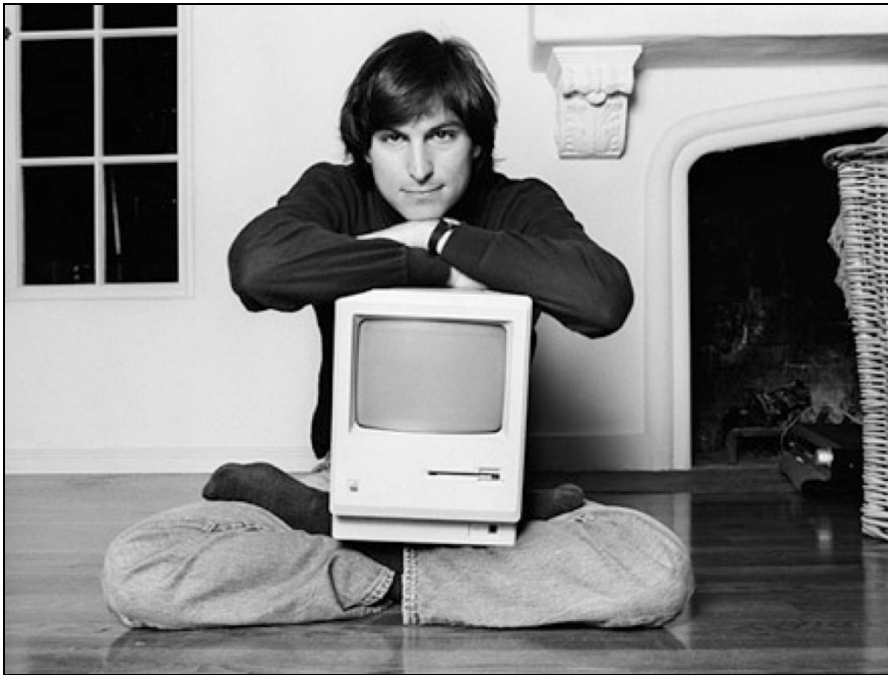


Beautiful weather...



and some of the best technical minds that work in surrounding tech companies mentored doe-eyed student like me.

It was a wonderful environment. The valley was sprouting with ideas and I saw it growing all around me. I remember driving everyday from school and passing by this company that was so exciting to me. I saw it grow building by building and it was ran by this visionary I would later come to see as one of my most important relationships.



No discussion of Valley history can be complete without this man, who the world lost just a month ago.



And who would ever forget when he decided to change the world to put a ding in the universe?

I was in the Valley last month and yes, they did remember.





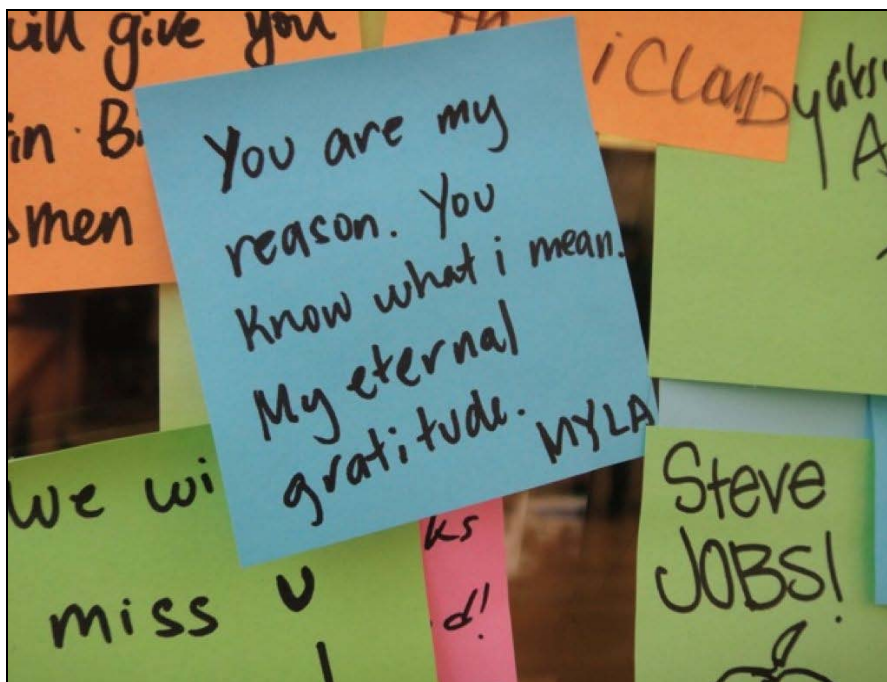
This is Apple's Palo Alto store, Steve's personal favorite.



And yes, they came to pay homage to the man



Both the young and the old.



I found myself writing my own remembrance and I think while I did not know it way back then, I know now that this may have been one of the longest partnerships in my mind...My imaginary relationship with a role model.





This is now the stuff of legend but the Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak partnership today is being compared



to a similarly legendary partnership of Bill Hewlett and David Packard.

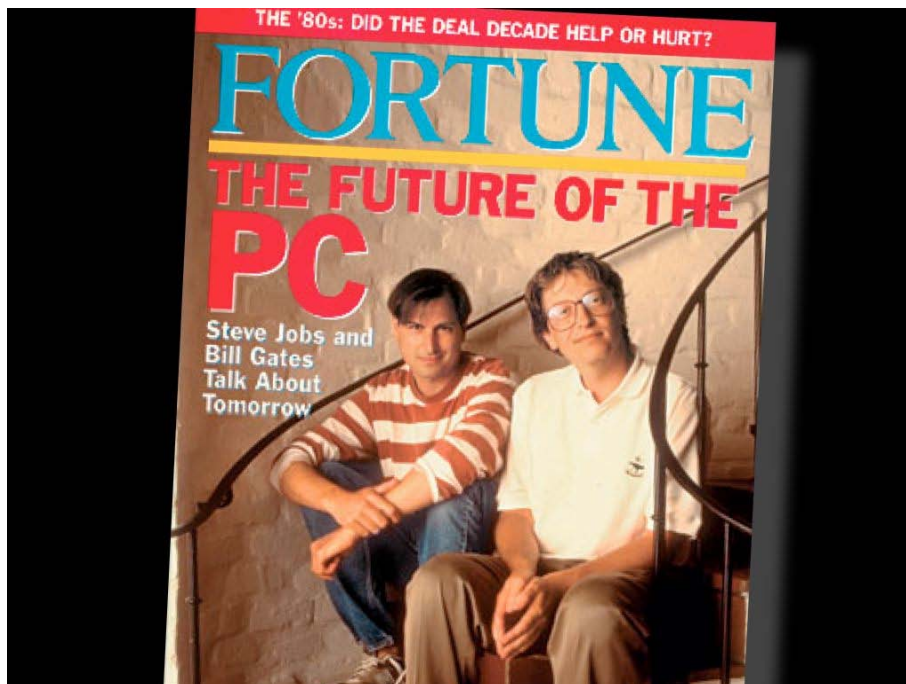
YES, that's right...partners do matter.

Partnerships can be the stuff of legend.

Especially when you can find a perfect  
complement,

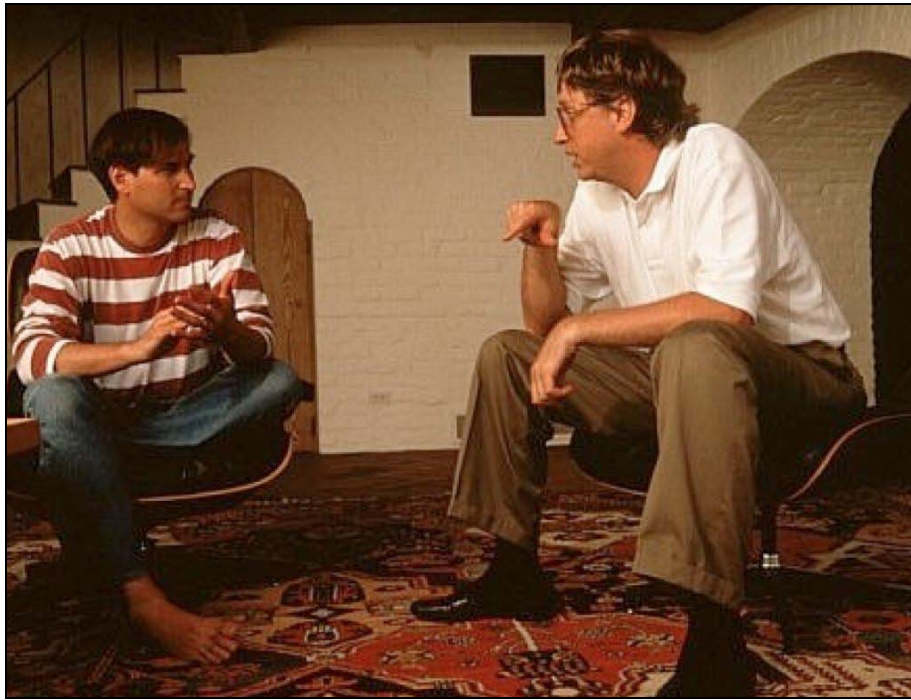
A common vision.

Partnerships can be the stuff of legend. Especially when you can find a perfect complement, with a common vision.



And here is not something some of you would call a partnership, but it truly was.





A partnership of competitors, they had argued...



and argued and argued whose business model was more successful, that of total user experience control as Steve had in mind, or that of collaboration via licensing that Bill insisted upon.

Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook will probably say of these two:

“Well, It’s Complicated”

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# Microsoft to invest \$150 million in Apple

By Dawn Kawamoto, Ben Heskett and Mike Ricciuti  
Staff Writers, CNET News

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**BOSTON--**Microsoft (MSFT) is lending Apple Computer (AAPL) an unexpected and somewhat controversial helping hand.


Microsoft chairman **Bill Gates** said today that the software giant will invest \$150 million in Apple and will develop and ship future versions of its Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer, and development tools for the Macintosh.

Gates, who appeared via satellite link, and Apple director Steve Jobs made the announcement here today at the Macworld Expo trade show.

Both Apple and Microsoft executives denied that the

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Maybe some of you know that when times were very hard for Apple, meaning they were nearing bankruptcy, Steve Jobs turned to his erstwhile competitor Bill Gates for a strategic investment.



I can almost imagine Steve Jobs telling Bill Gates many years later that it could have been the worst or best investment that Bill Gates had ever made.

If I had one take away from these two, which I believe in, and apply until today it would be:

Partnerships can be Complex, Complicated, sometimes even  
Competitive

Harness Competition to Foster Innovation.

Do not be afraid to hire or partner with people  
who are better in some ways.

Those to Agree and Disagree with  
To learn from, Or teach

To get to a Collective Vision.

Partnerships can be complex, complicated, and sometimes even competitive. Harness competition to foster innovation. Do not be afraid to hire or partner with people are better in some ways. Those to agree and disagree with, to learn from, or teach, to get to a collective vision.



And here was another Apple partner Sergey Brin and Larry Page of Google. We find Google's products all over Apple's from Google Maps to Search and more. In fact, Google CEO Eric Schmidt sat on the board of Apple. UNTIL



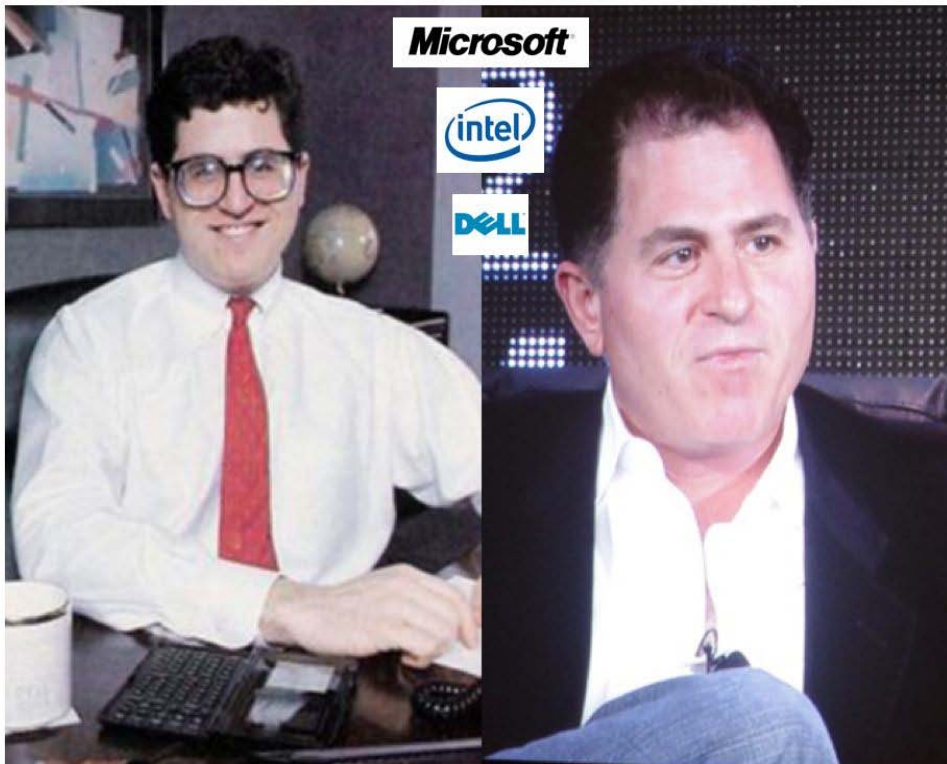


Google launches its own mobile product, ANDROID

There are partners whom you will trust, but in the end you will feel  
has betrayed that trust

MOVE ON

I guess there are partners whom you will trust, but in the end you will feel has betrayed that trust. And yes, I have had those, and the best advice I could ever give is: MOVE ON, there is no better revenge than to be wildly more successful ever after.



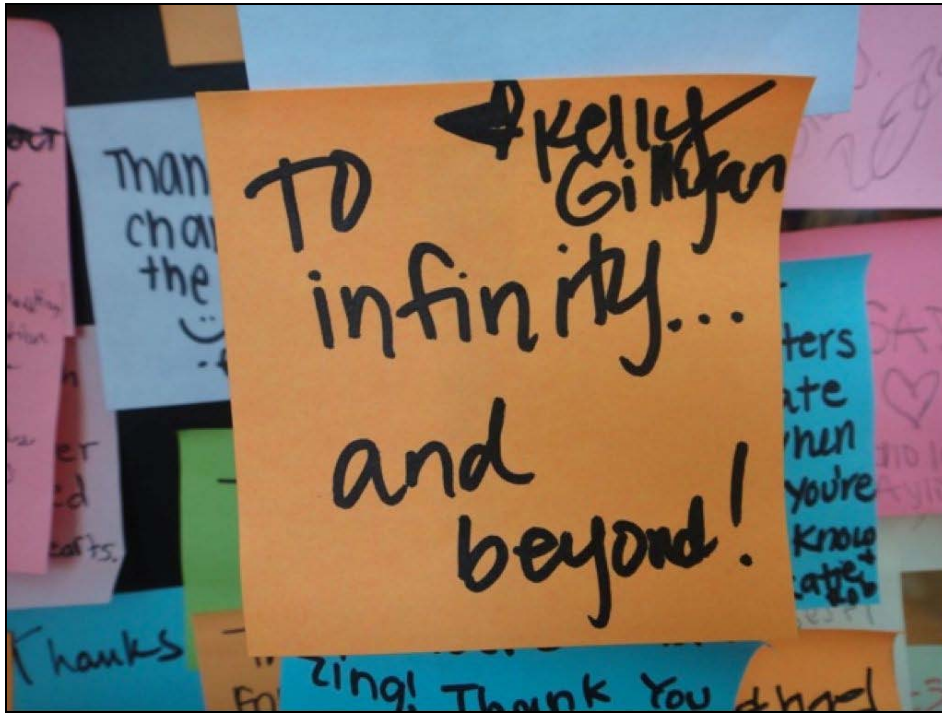
Here is another kind of partnership we all know. Mr. Michael Dell, who from his startup days had decided to stick to two partners forever more, and had not done bad as a result of it. Dell has kept to its decades old model of having only two partners, Microsoft and Intel.

There are partners who will be loyal through all types of challenges  
and whose core values are truly compatible with yours

Work very hard to keep and nurture them

Yes, there are partners who will be loyal through all types of challenges and whose values are truly compatible with yours.

Work very hard to keep and nurture them. Lucky for me, I have a lot of those that I cherish.



It is minds and role models like these that I discovered in Silicon Valley in my college days that led me to believe I can go anywhere and go as far as I wanted to go.



And like CP who Steve Jobs moved to move to the Valley, I also had that person who sparked me to go back home.





Yes, for some reason, Home was calling me back and it was about the right time.

It was 1986, and I watched from afar as a new day was dawning in the Philippines. So upon graduating 1988, I decided it was time to go home and find my own garage.



Coming home, I was surprised with what I found. There was NO INNOVATION whatsoever. No garages, no brand new tech, nothing. What a great place to be. It was A David vs. Goliath scenario! Big Blue versus my technology called “networks” that would challenge the big expensive iron and hundreds of millions of pesos one had to spend to handle big data the IBM way. Oh how I loved it, I was going to revolutionize the Philippine data scene!



Unfortunately, it was a different kind of revolution that met me. Erstwhile partners of Cory in country building became her fiercest enemies. I had to go thru 7 coup attempts during her watch as I was starting out my business and to top it all, not only was there no innovation, there was also no electricity to run my wonder networks.



It was 1992 and I miraculously had won a 120 Million-peso contract to re-engineer the Social Security System networks away from Big Blue. For a 21-year old, this was insanely great, unraveling an inefficient system and spreading information back to the people even in far flung provinces where it could most matter.

But the big story of my early career was the ascendancy of a president that really leveled the playing field.



Ramos decided to break the telecommunications Cartel and it was a single act that I believe spawned a new day for the Internet in the country.

It also started my love, compete, partner, love, hate (mostly with them hating me) relationship with Philippine telcos.



The telco break-up really spurred investments in connectivity, the beginnings of the Internet and an explosion in data that was a perfect combination of events for my journey into many other adventures.





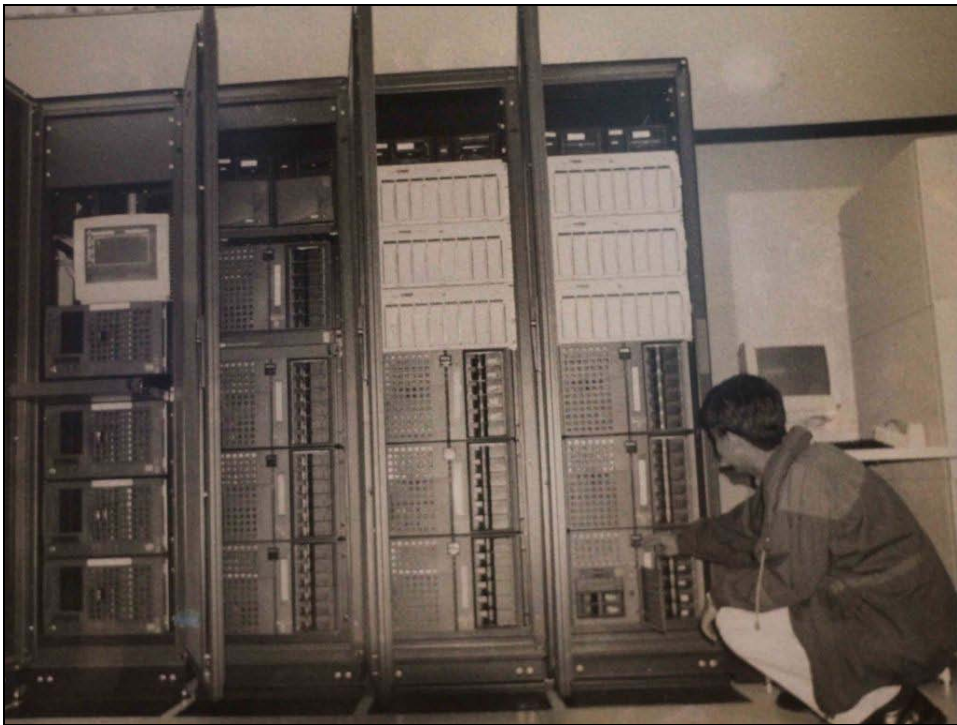
We built...



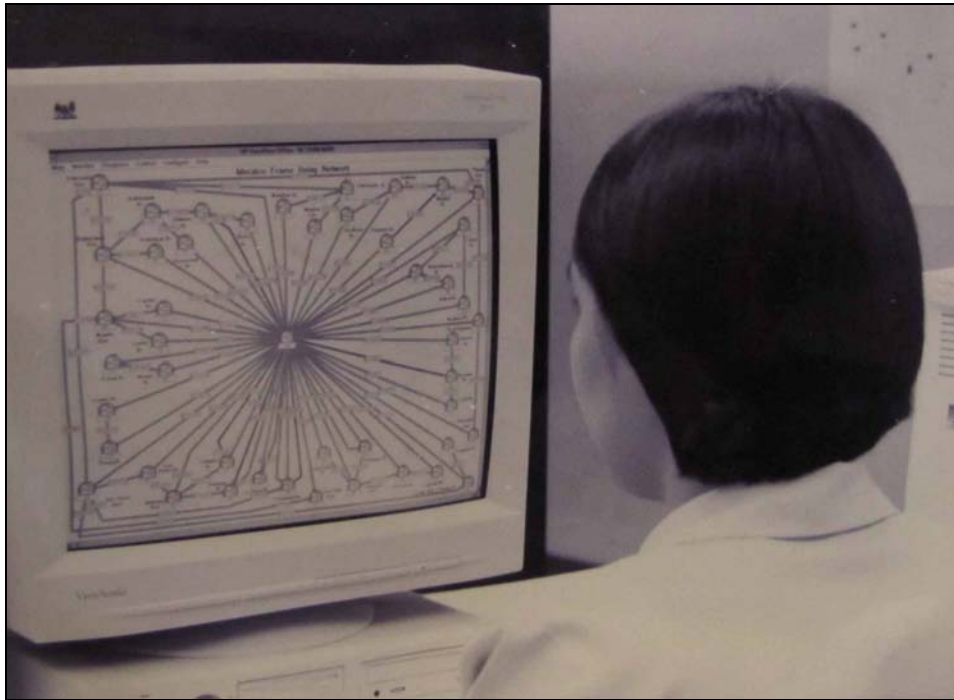
and built...



and built...



and built...



until we became one of the biggest systems integrators in the country.

Aside from the data explosion, there was also the rise of cellular at that time. Our technology of “wonder networks” gave way to wonder devices and magical products that we could bring mainstream. FIRST, and always FIRST. We could now see around corners!



Thus was born Microwarehouse, founded with my husband in 1995 which quickly became one of the fastest growing distributors of technology in the country, by finding partners that are hip and cool to use, and finding them much earlier than anybody else.





There was Palm, the Ipod, lifestyle products entering your homes, lifestyle devices, and yes, we also brought in the Blackberry first.

Most importantly, we also brought networking mainstream by training hundreds of SME's and small network integrators around the country on the wonders of creating their own links and windows into the Internet.

But my greatest fun was yet to come with totally non-traditional technology partners. I had to change my mindset about what a partner meant. While it was technology partners before, the cellular revolution was fast coming with texting becoming the next big thing. It was then that my husband and I founded Wolfpac as a content company.

**WOLFPAC**  
WolfPac Mobile, Inc.

- Logos, Picture Messages, Textpressions
- Ringtones

**UNIVERSAL RECORDS**

**VIVA RECORDS CORP.**  
A VIVA ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY

**SONY BMG**  
MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

The products were cheap and cheerful, just like texting was.. So it was not so hi tech, but really, well, who cares?



It became wildly profitable in no time, by partnering with music companies and content owners who also wanted to join the mobile bandwagon.



But the real game changer was still around the corner. When others decided to compete with us in the area of tones and logos, we elevated the game and launched a product called Text to Millions. It caught the pulse of Filipinos penchant for taking a

risk, or testing his texting mettle to win that prize. On our first day, we hit a million hits and our servers crashed. What a great day that was nonetheless.

**SMART**

Acquires

**WOLFPAC**  
WolfPac Mobile, Inc.

The First Exit

**SMART KICKSTART**  
**₹1,000,000**  
**TEXT CHALLENGE**

LOVE a million!  
It's so easy!

Get a chance to win **P1 Million** in the Grand Draw!  
Nokia 3100 cellphone every week! Nokia 1100 phone kit everyday!

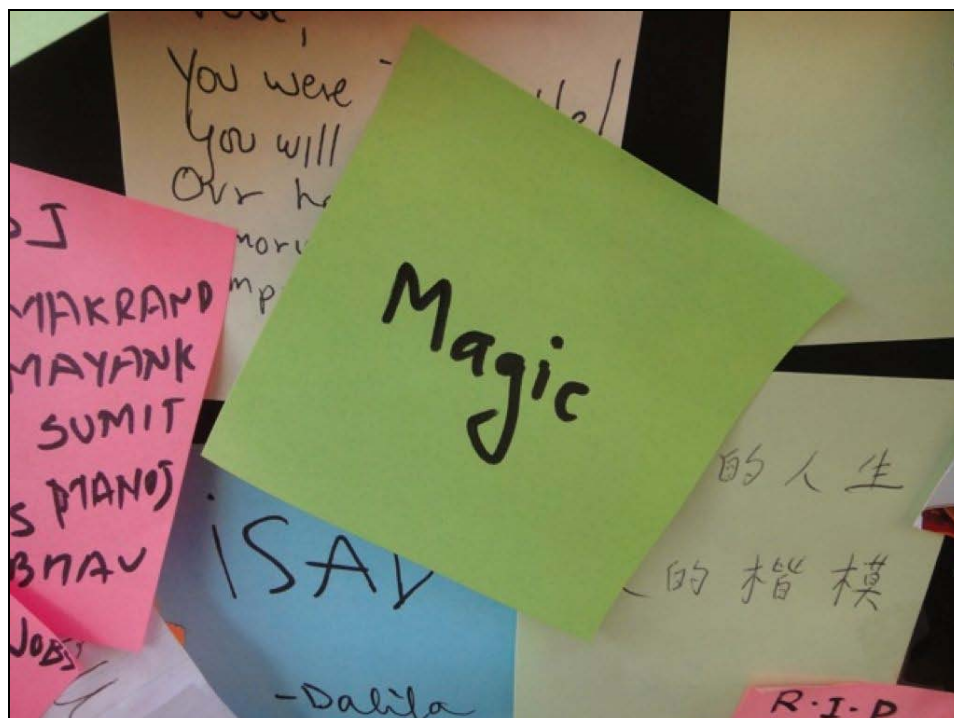
Register to get Daily Quiz Calendar  
Solve and earn raffle points  
for the Grand Draw!

Answer the daily quiz  
questions for a chance to win  
in the daily and weekly draw!

375  
QUIZ

**SMART**  
Simply Smarter!

We were soon, I felt, making too much money. I felt that the barriers to entry for such an industry was too low. I needed to find a way to partner closer to the telco and I was only too happy when Smart Communications and I had a discussion around a merger and acquisition. Smart acquired Wolfpac in 2003, it was their first software company acquisition, and despite all the success of my previous companies, I truly felt that I had become a Valley girl with my first real exit.





It was Magic. And I wanted to create more magic. So at around the same time, I thought that a technology was so magical, it could resolve something that has always bothered me. And that was Imperial Manila's control of the Internet.



MDI was growing, but I was not happy. It took forever to get connectivity from telcos, and many companies could not grow their networks outside of Manila. The flaw of the Ramos deregulation was that the country was cut up into many telco regions and only telcos within a region can serve a customer who wanted connections there. Thus Cebu could not connect easily to Davao or Davao to Palawan. Imagine the headache of setting up a 120-site network similar to the SSS and it may take you years to complete connections.

I asked myself; if it can be done with cellular voice, why not connect data wirelessly?

The tech was not yet widely known and I scoured the earth to find it, if only to deliver the Internet everywhere from Luzon to Tawi-Tawi. It took about a year to find the tech and another year to make it work, but we did this one right.

Meridian was born in 2000, AGAIN to compete with the telcos.



Okay sure, I was happy Coca-Cola can easily now connect to its plant in Binan, but what truly made me happy with this company is the pride and joy I feel today when I see a Meridian Antenna connecting



CARD SME BANK in Tagaytay....or an antenna connecting,



Kinggingan Handicraft and Antiques,



In Wawa, or an antenna...





To Manang's SARI-SARI STORE anywhere in the probinsya.

Meridian is acquired and becomes



The telco becomes partner again

This was the toughest company for me ever. We Bet everything, and nearly lost everything because of the timing. It was a tough time for family too, because as partners, not all of us saw things the same way. But driving thru Batangas Sunday and taking those pictures, I just showed you; I still think it was very well worth the risks to be able to bring the internet to the masses. It was also a Valley type-sized exit, with Smart buying Meridian for 50 Million US dollars in 2006 and the telco was my partner again.

## Stop and Learn Again

Yes, there are times that serial entrepreneurs get tired too. I needed to learn again and decided that contributing to industry would be a way to quench my longing. As part of the Meridian buy-out, I told Polly that I was being offered a seat in a global technology body, the GSM Association as a member of its top technology board, the Executive Management Committee.



It was here that I met and interviewed Tim Berners Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, or Jim Balsillie of RIM, and the likes of Masayoshi Son of Japan, Chairman Wang of China Mobile, Sean Maloney of Intel, and Sunil Mittal of India. All visionaries of the telecommunications industry.



It was also then that I met the top technology and strategic minds in telco. The GSMA was the body that decides what happens to your cellphones two years moving forward. And here I became international again.



I was also voted by industry colleagues to Chair the Mobile Innovation Forum, from 2007-2010, which aimed to match start-ups in mobile on the one hand, with investors and mobile telcos on the other. I lived on a plane for two years, zigzagging between Barcelona, London, Israel, and Hong Kong. It was exhilarating work, encouraging young entrepreneurs not to give up and to find their way in the goliath world of massive telcos.





In my latest start up, I only hope to bring the latest bleeding edge tech again, as the Internet and mobile finally meet on any screen, and on any device or non-device. It has also become the network of people, with a democracy entitled to every connected individual.



### **Novare bags Globe Telecom's Vendor of the Year Award**

(The Philippine Star) Updated July 18, 2011 12:00 AM Comments (0)



MANILA, Philippines - Proving its innovative approach in creating unique store experiences, Novare Technologies was recently conferred by [Globe Telecom](#) with the prestigious Vendor of the Year Award for its outstanding VAS (value-added services) performance for 2010.

Novare Technologies, headed by its CEO Myla Villanueva and COO Antonio Javier Jr., is the first company with a professional relationship of less than one year with Globe to win this coveted award.

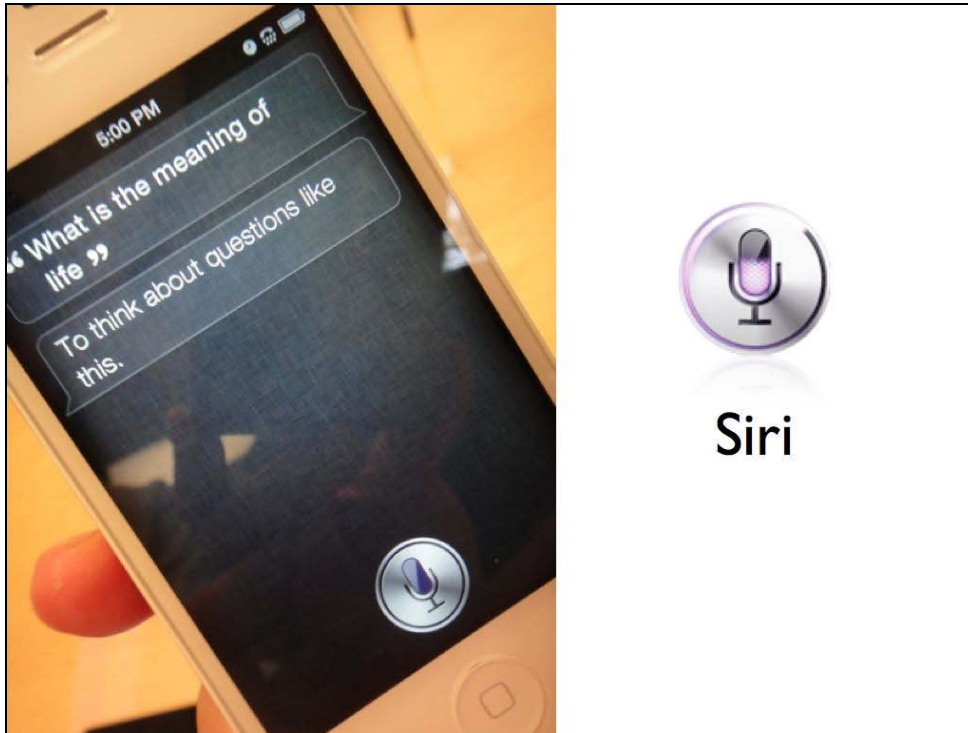
In its infancy, Novare has already been recognized as a valuable partner to both local telcos.



Let me be exact, this is not because of me, this is because of partners and the Filipino talent who work with me in the company. It is they who allow us collectively, the ability to dream big.



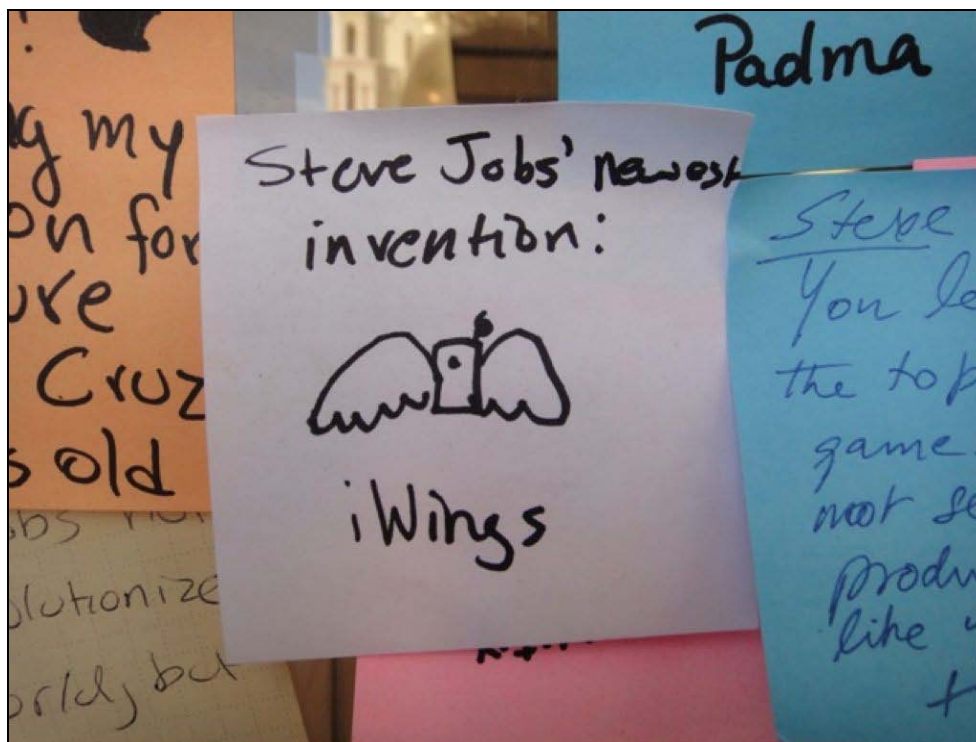
Our next goal as a group of companies is to hit China and other South East Asian countries, which is made possible through partnerships with telcos and Internet companies localized and establishing there. Hopefully, we will be able to link this back too, to even older valley partnerships, with a goal to enable services for and of the emerging markets. I feel this is a wave bigger than that of the last two decades of the Internet's exponential influence and growth.



I don't know what will come of this next adventure but who knows? I asked SIRI this when I was in Palo Alto, and she cleverly answers me and tests my resolve.

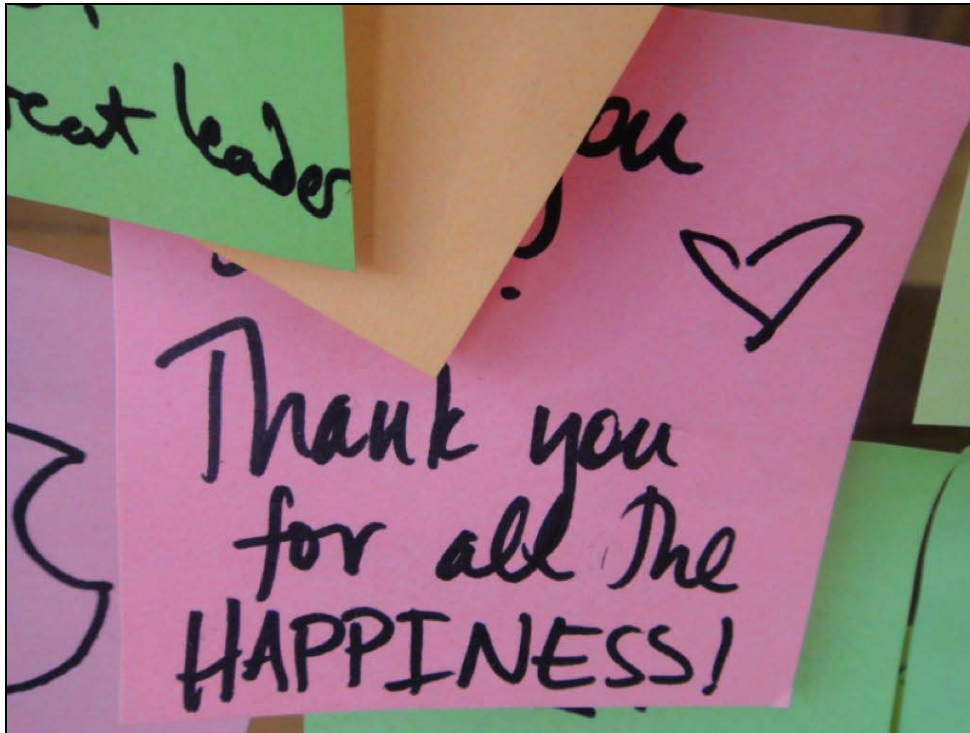
Myla: What is the meaning of Life?

Siri: To think about questions like this.



But truly, nothing seems impossible when armed with partners and co-workers who share common goals, common dreams, and a role model or two.





Thank you for all the Happiness.