Growth

2002 - 2008

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"We hired developers, support analysts, trainers, and administrators; it was crazy."

Charlie Kratsch, Founder and CEO

In 2002, Infinite Campus and its 15 employees moved to a suite in the Country Insurance building in Arden Hills, Minn.

On the Move

Charlie Kratsch, Founder and CEO

One of the early challenges we faced was being ahead of our time. We had a web-based product, but that's not what the market was looking for. Then, just after Y2K everything changed. School districts began to see the value not only of the web, but of having all their data managed by a single district-wide system. We moved out of Centennial and into our own office. We hired developers, support analysts, trainers, and administrators; it was crazy. We expanded rapidly across the country into big districts and small. We were called an "overnight success," but many of us remember the lean years that had come before.

A wave of talented developers came aboard...and stayed.

Teamwork and collaboration created a work hard, play hard culture.

Dan Sweet, Luat Ngo and Bai Li (left to right) were among the company's first developers and fill similar roles today.

"I didn't expect to stay"

Luat Ngo, Software Engineer, Sr.

"I met Dave Frankson (pp. 8-9) in college as we pursued computer science degrees," Luat said. "A couple years later, in 2002, Dave mentioned Infinite Campus was hiring. I got hired, but I didn't expect to stay. During the dot-com boom, developers did not stay in a job more than a couple years. California was in my plans. But, I've been here 16 years because of the strong company leadership and interesting projects," Luat said.

Remembering longer weeks
Although Infinite Campus was growing rapidly, it still felt like a startup. "The tech industry was booming then and there were many 60-hour work weeks," Luat said.

Spearheading Campus Food Service and Point-of-Sale
"I coded the first Food Service and Point-of-Sale Premium Products," Luat said. Today, over 800 districts use Campus Food Service to help streamline cafeteria operations, track food purchases and design flexible menu layouts.

Describing our developers
"Infinite Campus developers are introverts, nerdy, and helpful," Luat said.

"It was destiny"

Bai Li, Principal Software Engineer

"In 2004, I was finishing two master's degrees at the University of Wisconsin when I learned of a developer job at Infinite Campus," Bai said. "It was destiny."

Large and welcoming
Bai arrived at the Arden Hills (Minn.) office – just one tenth the size of the current headquarters – and remembers it being large: "There was so much space! The Campus culture back then is almost the same as today: very open and welcoming with friendly, caring managers and intelligent coworkers."

Building communication tools
Bai is proud of his collaborative work with ShoutPoint (a Campus business partner) that created Campus Messenger with Voice. "It's a powerful tool that can deliver thousands of calls in a minute," Bai said. Districts use the tool to communicate with staff, students and parents via phone or text messaging. Using system data, it can also distribute emergency notifications.

"We create things…it's very rewarding"

Dan Sweet, Manager, Software Development

"In fourth grade, my days consisted of typing and modifying programs on a TRS80 computer," Dan said. "My parents would say, 'You need to go outside!'"

"As a kid, technology interested me," Dan said. He now oversees 15 engineers and analysts. "We create things…it's very rewarding."

What were the early years like?
"Work hard, play hard…cliché, but true," Dan said. "We were focused and quickly built one tool after another. During lunch we'd play video games and have LAN Parties." Learn about the parties and much more at infinitecampus.com/25.

Main way it's changed?
"We built and released tools…then got feedback. Now we have developers, analysts and QAs, and conduct usability testing so software goes out with fewer bugs. We talk to users and value their feedback," Dan said.

Numerous programming languages...
have been used by Campus developers over the years. However, our top programming language is collaboration as developers talk to end users to ensure their feedback is incorporated into products.

</br>SQL
GROOVY
Active Server Pages (ASP)
</>
VB Script
XSLT
<..>
Java
VB
Infinite Campus
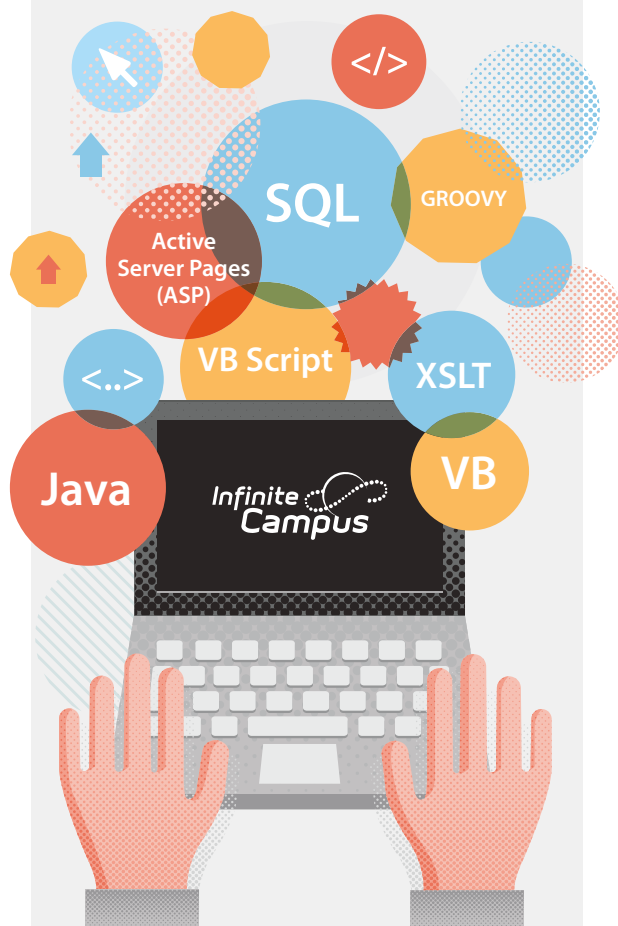
Many people wanted to join an "up and comer."

"Crazy hours" fueled a rapidly growing customer base...Infinite Campus was taking off.

"I was impressed"

Liz Reich, Benefits Administrator

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In 2002, I read a four-line ad for a receptionist and went to the library to research the company... no luck. I found a New Brighton address and drove there to apply; *low and behold, the company wasn't there.* I called and learned they moved to the old Country Insurance building in Arden Hills. I interviewed with Charlie; I understood his vision and bought in right away. I started and the next time I saw him, he was on his knees assembling desks...I

was impressed. It was clear he was committed to this.

People had laptops on top of boxes
Thirty people...15 Campus developers on one side and 15 support people on the other. My desk was in the middle. I didn't realize there were two different companies: Infinite Campus and Nexus. I wasn't sure who I worked for...it was Nexus.

People worked crazy hours. They were so hungry to make this happen. Charlie said we had five irons in the fire and if we got

three, great...if we got all five, we'd choke ourselves. We got all five: Bureau of Indian Education, Denver, Jefferson County (Col.), Madison (Wis.), and the Montana Office of Public Instruction.
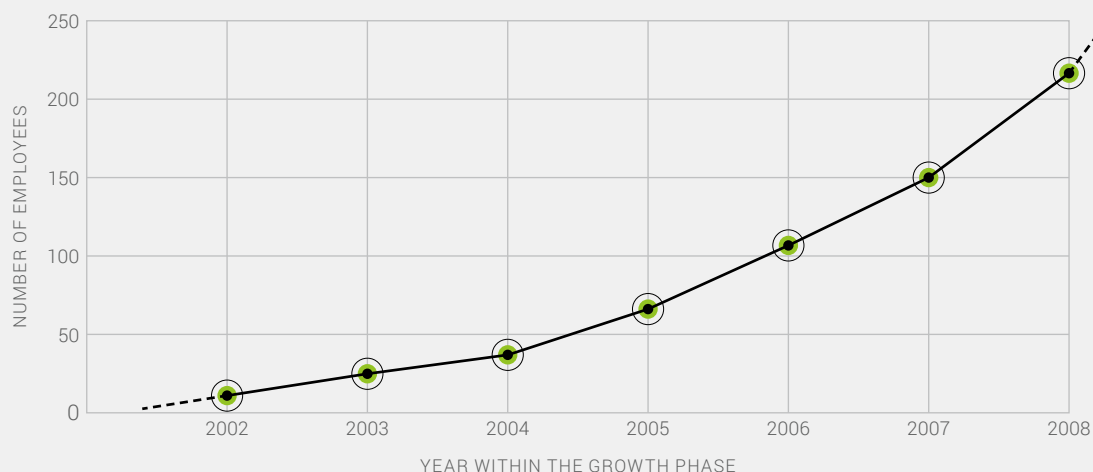
Today, more than...
2,000 districts across the country are customers and share our mission of Transforming K12 Education®.

Flashback (2005): Charlie (Founder and CEO) and Eric Creighton (Chief Product Officer, Student Administration) serve pancakes to Liz Reich (left) while Competitive Intelligence Specialist Liz Schmitt (right) looks on.

Steady growth

Nearly half of the company's current employee count (450) came aboard during the 2002-2008 Growth Phase.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

250

200

150

100

50

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2002   2003   2004   2005   2006   2007   2008

YEAR WITHIN THE GROWTH PHASE

"I felt inspired by his story"

Sal Schmidt, Client Executive, Sr.

I was the registrar and on the SIS selection committee at Kaukauna High School (Wis.) when Charlie demoed in late 2003. We picked Campus. Nexus, Campus' first channel partner, trained and supported Wisconsin Campus districts. I knew Campus was an up and comer so in July 2004, I became a remote, Wisconsin-based Nexus employee. In November, I went to Arden Hills for my first company meeting.

Fired and hired
The first evening, Charlie announced all Nexus employees were fired but we could interview that night to join Campus. I thought, oh man…this is not how I thought today would go! I was scared. But, I got hired and Nexus became part of Campus in April 2005. The next couple years, I trained Campus customers in Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, Colorado…oh yeah, I sensed it booming.

One thing gave me the confidence to succeed here; it was that Charlie never went to college…I was a stay-at-home mom, so neither did I. At so many places, you supposedly need that piece of paper. Charlie was so successful and I felt inspired by his story…if he can do it, so can I!

"International sensation"

Jettie Ditmarson, Content Creator

I worked for the New London-Spicer School District (Minn.). Charlie installed his system there in 1998; district staff leaned on me to get things up and running.

Then: Documentation
In the summer of 2003, the system was set to get a new look. I asked Dave Van Meter (p. 47) if he would hire me for the summer to replace screenshots in the documentation. He did. By summer's end, they didn't want me to leave! I briefly returned to the district, but joined Campus that October.

Now: Campus Master
Dave brought the Campus Master idea to a group of employees in 2015. I pounded out a project plan and next thing I know…I'm creating a repeatable, company-wide master database with a consistent data set and rich content. With it, we showcase our SIS in demos.

In 25 years…
Campus will be an international sensation, serving schools around the world.

Staff hit the countryside to onboard hundreds of districts.

Dedication and determination resulted in successful implementations.

Campus + BIE = 186 districts & 23 states

Matthew Brent, Software Product Analyst, Sr.

"When I started in 2004, Campus was charged with energy. Everyone was excited about the future. There was talk of exponential growth and when the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) selected Infinite Campus…the excitement expanded from there," Matthew said.

Infinite Campus embarked on implementation with the BIE knowing their stakeholders ranged from novice to expert regarding technology use. Campus put together a dedicated team of individuals (support, trainers and client executives) exclusively for BIE districts and had every district implemented within a year.

"I joined our BIE team and traveled to remote places…unpaved roads…no road signs," Matthew said. "GPS was new at the time and Campus splurged and covered device rental…satellite connections were little to none in remote areas and on reservations. In many cases, I was 'lost' that last mile. Sometimes they would say, turn left at this rock or that broken down pickup…I could only hope it hadn't been towed."

Passionate about customers
Many BIE districts had never used a student information system. So, the BIE team created a process for districts to have a successful system adoption and ensure they received funding. "With the logic we had access to, we proactively sent reminders to districts on when to take attendance, and schedule and enroll students so they received the full funding they deserved," Matthew said.

Campus + Kentucky = 176 districts

Josie Trobec, Manager, Project Management

In 2007, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) implemented Infinite Campus State Edition in 176 districts in just 30 months. "Our mentality has always been, roll up your sleeves, dig in, and help wherever you can. And that's exactly what we did during the Kentucky implementations," said Josie, Campus employee of 11 years.

Dedication and determination
With a dedicated team, Kentucky implementations were a huge success. "I was out weeks on end. I would come home with just enough time to put in a load of laundry, repack, and hug my kids and husband. I knew the roads in and out of Kentucky airports better than I did here in Minnesota. Car rental employees at the airport knew me by name. Nevertheless, it was all worth it. To see the countryside, to meet so many district employees and learn how proud they were of their district and community…it was truly a rewarding experience."

A ride worth taking
"My first Kentucky trip was to Bowling Green. A co-worker and I were driving to our first district when he missed the exit…he says 'hold on' and backs up on the freeway before exiting. At that moment, I knew my time with Campus would never be dull… it would be a ride worth taking! And, how true that statement has been these past 11 years."

Photo submitted by Josie Trobec: "I took this picture on one of my many implementation trips to Kentucky!"

Just the beginning
After successfully implementing South Dakota and the BIE, more statewide customers followed: Montana, Kentucky, Nevada, and most recently, Hawaii.

From a Customer

"I've worked with Infinite Campus for 10 years at two different Kentucky districts. The work they put into making our lives simpler and easier is just amazing. I also love that KDE works closely with Campus to better serve our Kentucky schools, staff and students. Thanks to all those involved over the last 25 years!"

Sandra Wilson
SIS Coordinator - Corbin Independent School District