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ASKED & ANSWERED; **Dev Ittycheria, Mongo DB**

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Dev Ittycheria has been a successful founder, a venture-capital partner and a top executive in a global firm. But the fact that he played a role in taking three tech companies public drew the most attention when he was named chief executive of MongoDB in 2014. The database software pioneer, which aims to challenge Oracle for the future of database management, has raised more than \$300 million since its 2007 founding and has been valued at \$1.8 billion. The Times Square-based company is considered a candidate to go public within the next couple of years.

What exactly does MongoDB do?

Every application-on your phone, at work-has a database where information is stored. The legacy databases, like Oracle's, behave like spreadsheets, with nice rows and columns. But now, information could be a video file, an unstructured text or a graphic that doesn't fit in rows and columns. We are a next-generation database. We offer a very flexible data model. As your app evolves, it's very easy to add new features, which is why developers love us. They can use this model to build apps far more quickly.

Are developers the secret to Mongo's success?

The developer today has enormous influence in terms of the technology agenda for most companies. Companies want to choose technologies that developers like. We believe Oracle is incredibly vulnerable because they've lost the developer's heart and soul.

You don't disclose revenue. Can you tell us about growth?

The last couple of years we've grown at high double-digit rates. Our employees numbered in the 300s when I joined; we're now in the 700s. We're a nine-figure [a year] business, and we're just scratching the surface. This is close to a \$40 billion market.

But you're not ready to go public?

We have very patient investors who want us to be a really seminal software franchise. Do we have the fiscal profile to be an attractive investment? Operationally, are we ready? And culturally? We feel like we're getting close.

New York is not known for pure technology companies. Why are you here?

If you're building a product for the world, you want to be based where the world is, not in some rarefied location where it's only tech. We have close proximity to customers-literally, I can walk out the door to some of the largest and most sophisticated companies in the world-and to Europe, Israel and Latin America.

But do you see a lot happening in terms of technology?

There's IBM in our own backyard, and larger tech companies like Facebook and Google are investing heavily in the New York tech scene. Cornell Tech has been a big boon to the city. That will all spawn a continued ecosystem of interesting tech companies.

Can you find all the engineers here that you need?

New York City is a growing market, so there's still plenty of headroom. That said, we're also finding people in other locations.

Your career must encourage other Rutgers graduates.

I had a chip on my shoulder. Part of the reason I went to a state school was my parents were rebuilding their lives in the U.S. Then you meet all these Ivy League grads, and you obviously are competitive, and you say, "I'm just as good as them, and let me prove it." That was a good motivational tool. I never felt entitled.

DOSSIER

WHO HE IS President and CEO, MongoDB

REVENUE "Nine figures"

GROWTH "High double-digit rates"

GLOBAL EMPLOYEES 700-plus

AGE 49

BORN Patna, India

RESIDES Warren, N.J.

EDUCATION B.S. in electrical engineering from Rutgers University

FULL PASSPORT The son of an engineer who transitioned from the oil to the aerospace industry, Ittycheria traveled the world as a child, living in Nigeria, Canada and the U.K., in addition to his native India. When he was 12, his family moved to the U.S., eventually settling in New Jersey, where he lost his English boarding-school accent.

HANDS-ON M.B.A. Ittycheria was planning to apply to business school when his idea for his first company-cloud-computing startup Applica-got funded. Building it "was my business school," he said.

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