Ensighten's CEO, Josh Manion, gathered his notes in preparation for a call with his executive team. Manion relocated his software company in December 2010. When the company first announced its product in September, it had five customers. Manion and his team of seven had worked hard over the previous three months to acquire new clients. Manion was on the verge of a deal with Global Media, Inc. (GMI) after months of intensive sales efforts. GMI was a Fortune 50 company that owned premier media properties around the world. As a startup with limited funds attempting to establish not only our company but also the industry as a whole, it is tempting to do anything to close a deal. This precedent will prevent many future conflicts.

Manion, a seasoned entrepreneur, graduated from MIT in 2001. He had started his first business. My partners and I self-funded that company, and I worked there for a year. Despite raising $50 million, Myteam struggled to build a web analytics business, and it was time for me to start a new company.

Manion founded Stratigent, a successful consulting firm with about 25 Web Analytics and Tag Management experts, between 2002 and 2009. Manion described the problem that he and other web marketers, managers, and consultants had noticed: Everyone wants to know where their customers come from and how much time they spend on their website, but tracking and analysing this data was extremely time-consuming. This technique, introduced around 2002, was followed by page tagging. If you want to track where a customer came from, you place a tag on the landing page, and when the page loads, the tag sends data to the analytical application that is tracking the origin. In practise, numerous analytical applications required the use of tags for data collection.

• Advertising tools that tracked the effectiveness of ad campaigns and affiliate traffic; and • Companies such as Omniture, Google Analytics, and IBM's WebSphere offered analytics packages that tracked where customers came from, how long they stayed, and what pages they visited.

• Instruments for testing and optimization that compared different versions of a website.

• Voice-of-customer packages that tracked surveys and other forms of consumer feedback and input.

Manion discussed the consequences of this growing trend toward web data collection and analysis. A large organisation may have hundreds or even thousands of websites. Consider the full range of products and web pages for companies such as Sony and 3M. A tag for each type of data or activity that the organisation wishes to track. Where did the customer come from, how long did they stay, what did they do while they were there, where did they go after that, and what did they buy?