Chapter 3 – The Basement Meeting

One of the most vivid conversations I’ve had about business was the initial conference call to start SQLServerCentral. There were seven of us on the phone, trying to decide how much to invest, how to structure things, how to organize the company and more. What I thought should be a 30 minute conversation took longer and we didn’t even settle most of the issues.

I lived in Highlands Ranch, CO, in a house that had a basement. I’d never had a basement before in my wife, growing up in Virginia where the water table tends to preclude building things underground. My wife and I had renovated the basement the previous fall, adding a large room with a big screen TV and a bar, a small office nook for me, and a bedroom down there. We’d also preserved a 15 or 20 ft section at one end of the basement as a storage area, leaving it unfinished. This unfinished section had one advantage over the rest of the basement; it was below the rarely-used living room, which made it also the quietest part of the house at 5pm most afternoons.

Leaving my office nook, searching for a spot where I didn’t have kids and dogs running across the floor above me, I walked into this unfinished section of my basement, cordless phone in hand, and joined a conference call that had six other people on it.

This was a call devoted to business. We all agreed that Brian’s SQLServerCental prototype was a good idea. It made sense to try and publish our own work instead of supporting Internet.com and the old Swynk. They didn’t seem to be willing to pay us for our work, and even less willing to respond to our emails.

We didn’t want to be in the position of working without being paid again. I don’t think many of us thought that our site would grow into a million dollar website. There might have been a few, and I know some people had more enthusiasm than others, but my hope was that this would grow back to the place where it could pay for a second car.