

## LIFERAY, INC.: FLEXIBLE & FUNCTIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Liferay helps its enterprise customers create digital experiences on the web, mobile and connected devices. The global open-source software company was founded in 2004, completely bootstrapped (atypical of the industry), says Chief Operating Officer and co-founder, Brian Kim.

Whether a customer of theirs wants to increase revenue through digital commerce channels, empower customer self-service, unify disparate systems, or something else, Liferay’s digital experience platform (or DXP) can be formed to fit the purpose.

**“Imagine our platform essentially as a moldable piece of clay,” Brian explains. “In the case of HP, they built a partner portal that integrates with many different systems to serve assets and information to their partners. On the other hand, a utilities company might use our platform to build a customer portal where users can log in and see billing information and other account information.”**



“John knows what we look for and what we like and don’t like. He knows a good cultural fit, not just what a good sales leader would be. He knows what types won’t thrive in our environment. He understands our business, is thorough and comprehensive and never wastes our time.”

**Brian Kim, Chief Operating Officer**  
Liferay, Inc.



### CHANGE-MAKING, COMPETITION & CULTURE

When Liferay first started working with RevsUp, it wasn’t just due to growth or out of a simple need to hire account execs. Instead, there were three primary drivers: For one, the company founders realized the time had come for an outside perspective. Second, they needed to find talent in a highly competitive market. And finally, they needed to find people who would jive with what is a unique company culture in their world of open-source companies.

#### 1: SEEKING CHANGE

Brian says that as the company grew, so did their team members, in terms of roles and responsibilities. People already within the company would be tapped to fill an open position or be promoted. To fill gaps that couldn’t be met internally, they relied on word of mouth or friend-of-a-friend-type referrals.

But with growth and the need to remain competitive, the way they hired and the roles they were hiring for needed to change.

“We’ve gotten much larger now and more profitable, so we realize there is a different caliber of talent we need to seek, beyond our small circle of people that we know,” Brian says. “We needed to reach an outside talent pool that we wouldn’t typically be exposed to. One of the things we don’t want is to be an echo chamber for ourselves. Because we all grew up in the company together, over time there is a tendency where you might start to think very similarly, and it’s hard to brainstorm ideas that are outside of the way we’ve done things in the past. We need more people who have experience and perspectives outside of Liferay. When they bring that into our organization, they can be change makers for us.”

## 2: REMAINING COMPETITIVE

Change-making is critical when you're in a fiercely competitive atmosphere. Brian says they initially worked with John and Mark at RevsUp to find both account executives and to develop sales leadership positions that could help take Liferay to the next level. In addition, they needed a recruiting company that could shape the type of roles they needed as they grew.

## 3. CULTURAL ALIGNMENT

Just as important to Brian and the other founders: Culture. "One of our main visions for the company wasn't just about being profitable or trying to sell the company, and we want to bring in sales leaders that understand that," Brian explains. "Yes, we're trying to improve our soft price, but one of the missions of this company was around giving back to the community, and that type of sales leader is working in concert with our culture. They also understand that while we want to build a high performing organization, we want to do so with grace and with the mindset of really helping people achieve their full potential. These are unique asks."

## THE REVSUP APPROACH: LISTEN, THEN OFFER INPUT & EXPERTISE

"What's been a new experience — or unique to me — is that John and Mark try to understand what it is that you're looking for, then give feedback on it," Brian explains.

Prior to finding RevsUp, Liferay would rely on internal HR recruiters, who Brian explains are good at collecting information and requirements for a role, but "it's the reality that they don't have sales experience themselves," Brian says.

On the other hand, "Mark and John have been salespeople themselves and they know what we need. They have been really receptive in trying to understand what our needs are finding that unique candidate for us. They've never been shy about telling us what makes sense, being an ear for us, answering questions about organizing teams, being available and giving their input and expertise."

Another thing that has impressed Brian is how thorough RevsUp has been. "Every time they send us a list of candidates, they're not dumping a resume on our plate. Every candidate John hands over has not only a resume, but also their LinkedIn profile and list of questions they've been asked, along with their answers. Plus, he has filtered out candidates he knows I won't like."



## THE RESULTS

For Liferay, Brian says results aren't just about the quantifiable or measurable. They follow performance-driving change, something that the Liferay team was understandably somewhat apprehensive about and partnered with RevsUp to effect through placement of the right team members.

"Our VP of global channel sales was recruited through RevsUp. He's been really instrumental in making changes through our organization," Brian says. "This person has really challenged the status quo, evaluating what makes sense for our business, and pushing us to make changes that we would've been more reticent to change before. He's been in the job for three quarters and has really been able to help us understand what makes sense for our channel business in a way that we haven't really thought through before."

