

Reaching the Next Peak

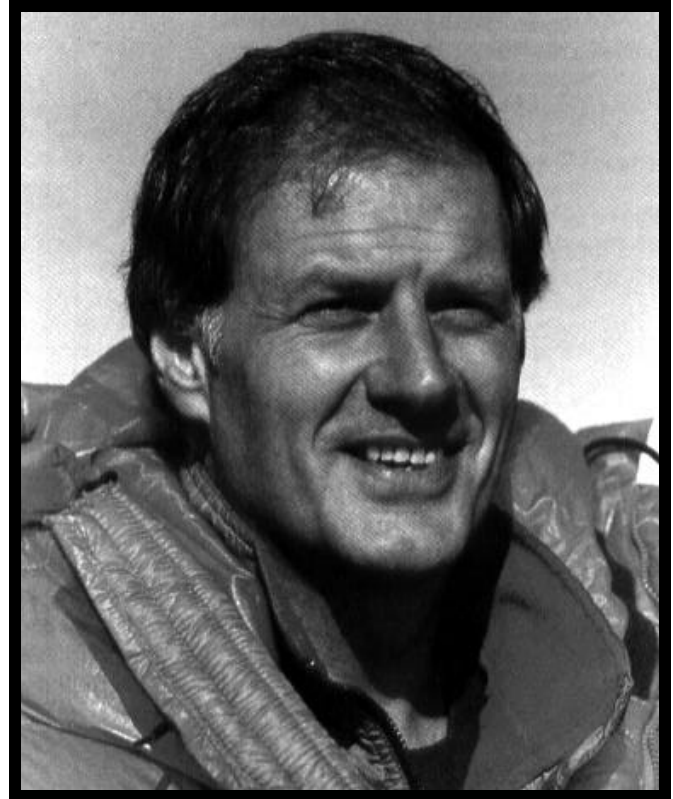
SUN MICROSYSTEMS STRIVES TO REACH THEIR SUMMITS OF SUCCESS

If you climbed Mt. Everest - the world's highest peak - would you rest on your laurels and savor the experience you'd had? That certainly isn't the case for John Amatt, the Canadian adventurer whose ascent of the mountain has led him to share the insights he gained. *"When you've attained something like climbing Everest, you don't sit back complacently... you reflect back upon the journey,"* says Amatt, *"It was very much a journey of discovery for every one of us on the expedition. And it was the experience that got us to the top that was more important than standing on the summit, because you don't learn anything when you're on the summit; you learn while you're struggling to get to the peak of achievement".*

The Adventure Attitude

Amatt's experiences climbing in Nepal and around the world are incredible in themselves, but his mission now is to take the lessons that came from his exploits and to evangelize what he calls the 'adventure attitude'. *"We must be adventurers, if we are to climb the mountains of change that we face in our lives,"* said Amatt. It's a mind set that is as much at home in the hallways of Sun in Linlithgow or Milpitas or Palo Alto as it is crossing the crevasses of Mt. Everest.

During his team's ascent of Everest, Amatt and his colleagues established base camps along the way, which would serve as shelters from 100-mile-per-hour winds and temperatures that descended to -40° F. *"It's very hard to leave behind the security and comfort of the base camp and go out into the*



Amatt: transferring physical experience into the intellectual arena.

world outside... the hardest part is just getting started," recalls Amatt. *"If we have a great dream, we must just begin, otherwise nothing will happen. We must confront fear and anxiety directly. We are forced to go out into the unknown global reality every day".* For people in WWOPS, pushing beyond the comfort zone and achieving what others have called impossible is a daily reality.

"You must confront your fears and dig deeply in your soul for the resources to meet the challenges," exhorted Amatt. *"Our commitment is rooted in our values and our*



Climbing in the Khumbu Icefall.

beliefs as individuals, families, and corporations. We need to be able to articulate those values and beliefs today, so that we can meet adversity in changing times". WWOPS' vision statement is one of the components of our collective values that can be a decision making guide when we feel gale force winds in our own business environment. One of the WWOPS Summit's purposes this year was to articulate further what the vision means and how the people of WWOPS can harness it and use it fully.

When Amatt returned to his tent on the side of Everest, he found a relatively safe haven, yet he warns that *"security is essential in life, but only as a foundation that you can come back to when you've been out there pursuing your own journey of discovery, learning and pushing those limits and finding new challenges for yourself"*. The notion of striving to succeed - whatever the goal - played a large part in Amatt's presentation. He said that *"it is in the struggle that we define ourselves"*. Amatt also used a quotation from

Eleanor Roosevelt to illustrate his point:

"You must do the thing you think you cannot do".

Teams Make Things Happen

Amatt and his Canadian colleagues were not the only members of the team. Without the Sherpa guides, Amatt realized that the journey would be impossible. Living at 12,000 feet, Sherpas are exceedingly well-adapted to the elevations of the Himalayas and have a significant cardiovascular advantage over people who live at or near sea level. The North American members of the team realized the cultural as well as physical differences of the Sherpas, and by acknowledging and appreciating those differences, they were able to incorporate the Sherpas and strengthen their entourage. The tragedy of Sherpa and Canadian deaths in avalanches also brought them together. *"We were no longer a group of people from the East and people from the West,"* declared Amatt. *"We were no longer Canadian employers and Nepalese employees: we were a team. We'd learned to trust each other and respect each other, and now we knew we wanted to climb this mountain together."*

Among the team, only a lucky few could hope to reach the summit. According to Amatt, it takes many people to establish the base camps and support the team. It is the people who comprise the team that make the summit ascent possible. The notion of individual glory, which one might associate with adventurers, was absent in everything that Amatt said at the WWOPS summit; his focus was entirely on the team. *"I should tell you that on this expedition, I didn't stand on the summit,"* says Amatt with a note of humility. *"As the leader of the team - as the manager - my job was to use the resources at my disposal to get one person to the summit, because when one person stood on the summit, the entire team achieved success"*.