



Visibility: A Focus for CEOs & Developers

Frank Roe, *CEO of SmartBear*



As a tech CEO, I understand the hyper-competitive markets we are all in right now. The pressure is real. With customers' expectations at the highest point, they can easily move to a competitor with a swipe on their mobile. The timing of new applications and updates can make or break uptake. As business demands increasingly more from software, the jobs of development teams continue to get harder.

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For me, having a complete view of the big picture of the business – to understand our company's true mission and execution strategies – has always been vital. But it's getting so much harder. To accomplish this, true visibility into all aspects of the business has never been more important.

The case for visibility is not new. We have long had KPIs, dashboards, and other measurements backed by advanced analytics to gain snapshots of business health. And monthly reports help us to better understand financial position, market opportunity, internal processes, risk, and more.

The problem is that most of these measures were designed before businesses sped up to internet time, let alone TikTok time. As a result, monthly reports are now too slow,

dashboards do not drill down to problem areas, and KPI numbers no longer tell the whole story.

As tech CEOs, we need to know where there are issues and concerns before they become more than just a timely inconvenience or business headache. Full visibility across the business is what helps fill in those gaps; that's the science. The art is learning how to apply that visibility to the business.

It's no different for software development teams. Increasingly, developers are expected to deliver the next release fast and flawlessly, but too often are working amidst missing gaps. They are expected to work at a lightning pace as they churn out high-quality software, all the while avoiding the pitfalls of those missing gaps. They often lack the connection points – not by their own shortcoming – but being unable to see across the landscape. They are often left without a complete understanding of the “why” and are simply expected to deliver the “what” while the “when” has already been predetermined.

As an industry, it's time for all of us to make sure our development teams have the critical piece they need – visibility into the key elements of the project, like

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information about the customer, usage, the problem being solved, critical features, project costs, timing, goals, and more. Another often-overlooked critical piece of visibility is where the company is going, what is the company's vision and strategy, and most importantly, how does that relate to what they are working on. Many times, they don't receive the internal visibility needed from the very beginning.

Developer visibility goes a step beyond simply offering better visibility of the software development lifecycle. We need to take a more humanized approach to visibility,

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allowing them to see the right information to take action. This information will enable more effective problem solving, which, in turn, drives better outcomes and better software, powers even better user experiences for our customers, and perhaps most importantly, drives more positive developer experiences.

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But it's a journey I encourage us all to take in 2023 as an industry. As developer pressure mounts and calls for better software quality get louder, end-to-end visibility will become crucial. It's time to provide visibility to software development teams everywhere so they can rapidly iterate and deploy with increasing confidence – do you agree?

Frank Roe is CEO of SmartBear. He joined the company in 2018 as Chief Revenue Officer, following a successful career in senior leadership positions at Oracle, Progress Software, and other leading software organizations.



About SmartBear

SmartBear provides a portfolio of trusted tools that give software development teams around the world visibility into end-to-end quality through test management and automation, API development lifecycle, and application stability, ensuring each software release is better than the last. Our award-winning tools include SwaggerHub, TestComplete, BugSnag, ReadyAPI, Zephyr, and PactFlow, among others. SmartBear is trusted by over 16 million developers, testers, and software engineers at 32,000+ organizations – including innovators like Adobe, JetBlue, FedEx, and Microsoft. With an active peer-to-peer community, we meet customers where they are to help make our technology-driven world a better place. SmartBear is committed to ethical corporate practices and social responsibility, promoting good in all the communities we serve. Learn more at smartbear.com, or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), or [Facebook](#).