# Diamonds clad in tailor-made software

"Many passionate people believe in the future of the diamond sector but very few companies have the perception to invest in technology... have difficulty thinking or planning for long term," feels Stephane Dujourdy, owner of an e-business company and a software creator for the diamond industry.

In an interview with Rough&Polished, Stephane talks about the service he has rendered to the industry; and his expertise in the software creation field.

**When and how did you first enter this software business? Have you been trained in this field to qualify as a software engineer/techie? When did you realize that this is going to be your future career and this line is for life?**

Way back in 1978, when I was about 14 I started using computers. The 'inspiration' was at school when I saw a computer room with a few of those first microcomputers (TRS80 Tandy and AppleII). At that time, it was exceptional to see computers at school and in public.

All I know was that I was totally fascinated with computers and from then onwards began my journey into the computer world.

With my pocket money, I bought a TI57 calculator and began exploring it to learn how to program a calculator. Soon came the realization that I

wanted to be in the computer software field and nothing else. That was just the beginning and I haven't looked back since.

I always knew that I would eventually be a software creator. Not a programmer or an analyst, but a guy who solved problems by creating 'made-to-measure' software. Since then, all my employments at various organizations were to create very special software.

**Can you tell us more about your e-business - Diamondsoftware.net? What are the products that you have created till now for the diamond industry? Do you have ready-to-use standard software, or are the products customized according to each diamond company's requirement of special complex software suited to their operations?**

Up to the present, I have created more than 50 different softwares for all stages of the diamond workflow, that is from the mine source (rough diamond sorting) through to the jewellery business management.

I've also created software for managing tenders with client bids process/control. The funny thing is, I have also created tender assistant software for clients who go to buy in a tender event! In addition, I have also created software for managing very complex world financial flux, software to manage rough stock, polished stock (small and/or large stones) boiling control,  and company management software.

For one particular client, I created a data mining software to try to analyze the polished market with weekly market analysis. My creations also include factory software to manage the diamond manufacturing workflow (stock, production and financial part, etc.), and also many small

softwares to help clients for diamond calculation, sorting, price estimation, etc.

**What type of software solutions did you create for your clients as you have catered to the diamond industry for more than 18 years?  Are they done on the client's request or as per what you see the clients lack and need to imbibe a particular software technology? How does it work initially with any client in the diamond industry?**

As I've mentioned earlier, every software is specific to the client's requirements. My clients explain to me how they actually work and I translate their method of management to a software that helps them work better. My motto is: It is not for the client to learn the software, but it is for the software to learn/understand the client.

I'm more of an expert/advisor who can create the best software tools for the client that can serve them for many years. It is totally the reverse of a startup that creates a software that lasts for the short term and makes maximum sales. I design software that must function for a very long time. Softwares I created in 1999 are still working today and will be relevant for many more years to come.

**Approximately, how many clients have you serviced till now in this 18 years in the diamond industry? And in which areas have you created software besides production, finance; what about security, designing or any other areas? Please give us an overview of the work done by you.**

I have served 30 clients in the past 18 years as I don't choose to have a lot of clients. I believe in quality, not quantity. To create high-level software, you need to concentrate on only a few projects at a time. Since the beginning, I never sought out new clients. In fact, companies contact me and I decide if I want to work for them or not, depending on whether the project is interesting and there is a relationship of understanding with them. I work only where there is mutual respect.

**How challenging is it for you to create unique and high-quality software for each client? For example, customizing according to their requirements? What problems have you faced in this long stretch of your career, given that workings of the diamond industry are very unique?**

The challenge, as always, is to find the right solution for a client's problem and till now with perseverance I've always found it.

I never say no to a client.  I feel professionalism, passion, discretion, trust and involvement are essential.

Most importantly, I can do that because I only concentrate on creating the software. I don't deal with hardware or standard software (Office, etc.) as there are plenty of companies who do that perfectly well.

**From which part of the world do most of your clients originate from, presuming that you must be catering to companies across the globe as service is mainly through the Net? Any solutions that were particularly challenging for you to create? And how did you manage it eventually? Your thoughts.**

To be exact, 90% of my clients are in Antwerp, but they generally have overseas offices (in Dubai, New York or Africa); other overseas clients can be managed through the Internet.

A recent challenge was when I was called to create a synchronization process between 3 offices for a client. For some reason, it's impossible to have a central server, so every office works offline and we needed to synchronize all operations every day. Because of the client's specific diamond workflow, it was very complex and no standard software could be used. So, I created a totally specific software for him.

Another tricky challenge was 10 years ago, when a client who had a private jet wanted to have a screen on board to see all the full process status of his 4 factories and offices. There were 2 challenges here – first, to create a simple software interface because he was not very good at computing, so I created a touch screen interface with very simple buttons to select what he wanted. The second challenge was to manage the transmission to the plane with a satellite connection.

**I understand that you have created the only software in the world that manages diamond boiling for one single diamond company. Can you name the company if possible? Are you open to creating a customized but similar software again, if a client needs it?**

For confidentiality reasons, I cannot give you the name. If another client wants a boiling software, it can be done. Should the  boiling company have different working and management methods, then I would create another software with my knowledge.

Diamantaires always think that everybody buys and sells carats the same way, but from experience, I see that every company is different and have their own way of working. With my special software diamond workflow knowledge, I can help them.

**Have you created software for any diamond mining company? If yes, which company and how was it different for you to work on that software as opposed to software for the regular diamond production, finance, etc.?**

Software for a diamond mining company (Angola) was only sorting software and it was 10 years ago. From my part, there is no difference compared to regular diamond companies. But as I explained, every diamond company is different in their style of working.

**Have you created software down the diamond pipeline to, say, wholesalers and retailers of polished diamonds or even diamond jewellery? Tell us how it differs from client to client in terms of the size of the company and their inventory?**

No, I have not worked for diamond retailers or jewellery retailers, but serviced only wholesalers. I have created software for clients with all inventory sizes but with a minimum of the workflow.

Very small companies do not have a budget to create a 'made-on-measure' software and also sometimes don't need one (an Excel sheet or a standard software can be good enough). The biggest flow managed by a software created for a customer was 2 million carats per year. The smallest was less than 5000 carats.

**Right now, do you have any novel idea in your head for a 'never heard of' software to tackle or use in the diamond industry? If yes, when do you plan to offer it to the industry?**

I have ideas about the sorting and the way of working with software, the interface and so on. But because I don't create standard/ready-to-use software, it is reserved for a current or future customer who will need it. My clients always benefit from new ideas.

**Wrapping up, what's your opinion on the diamond industry's readiness in absorbing the most sophisticated and latest technology faster than any other industry? Do you feel there is scope for further application of technology in the diamond industry?**

The diamond industry has changed a great deal during the last 10 years and there is a continuous improvement as in every other industry. There are many passionate people who believe in the future of the sector but very few diamond companies have the perception to invest in technology, even in a crisis. They have difficulty in thinking or planning for long term.

**Aruna Gaitonde, Editor-in-Chief of Asian Bureau, Rough & Polished**