

Personal History

Daniel Santiago

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I am Daniel Santiago, a 38-year-old Idaho native with a rich family life. Growing up as the youngest of three boys in a large, widespread family, I cherished the bonds we formed across the states, from Florida to Spokane, with many of us rooted in Idaho. My life is further enriched by my two wonderful daughters, aged 19 and 10, and my stepson, aged 20. My wife also brings joy with her two daughters, aged 14 and 8. Beyond my deep connection to technology, I find peace in Idaho's woods, a place that holds my most treasured childhood memories, especially in Dixie, Idaho.

During my teenage years, I was actively involved in the Young Marines, where I learned the essence of leadership, teamwork, and discipline. My natural leadership skills and problem-solving abilities were recognized with rapid promotions.

Post-high school, I pursued an Information System Analysis degree at Lewis Clark State College. Concurrently, I worked in the security industry and dedicated time to my church, where I helped develop their Radio and Over Air Television stations. This experience honed my communication skills, especially in bridging generational technology gaps, and steered my focus towards educational support in technology. My goal has always been to foster excitement and ease in adopting new technologies.

My journey in education and work has been both unique and self-directed. Although life circumstances required me to enter the workforce before completing formal education, my commitment to learning never wavered. I engaged in various after-hours training programs, including Fred Pryor seminars, New Horizons, Dell Academy, StormWind, Udemy, and Master Class, to name a few.

My involvement in local and state politics since 2008 ignited my passion for communication and highlighted a need for technical expertise. My technical acumen filled a significant gap, leading to impactful contributions, presentations, and speaking engagements on technical matters to state bodies and boards. I even carved out a role as a technical advisor with executive voting rights in the local Central Committee. This experience reinforced the importance of being able to articulate complex technical issues to a broader audience.

Furthering my career, I joined a local Radio Station managing nine stations across five cities. My proactive approach and ability to foresee and meet my superior's needs were instrumental in my success. Over five years, we streamlined the technical team while maintaining high standards of performance. Working under pressure with tight deadlines and diverse personalities taught me the importance of understanding each role within the organization. This understanding was crucial in identifying and resolving issues efficiently, recognizing that a minor hiccup could have far-reaching consequences. Through this, I learned the importance of comprehensive IT knowledge, not only in understanding technical issues but also in grasping their impact on the overall workflow and operations.

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As I navigated the phases of my life, the birth of my youngest child marked a pivotal transition from technical roles to sales. This shift not only afforded me the flexibility to balance work and family life, but also opened doors to financial opportunities and allowed me to delve into the creative aspects of my career. I found myself drawn to the art of marketing and advertising, where I applied my insights into psychology to create compelling campaigns.

Despite a flourishing career in sales, my heart remained in IT, leading me to positions at Avista Utilities and Dell Computers. At Avista, I gained specialized training in federal IT regulations and assumed the responsibility of being the sole technical support for a vast region covering three states. My time at Dell was equally enriching. Here, I worked at Saint Joseph Regional Hospital, spearheading the transition of patient room technology. This role demanded a blend of technical acumen and the ability to work seamlessly with a team of four, rotating through various duties including help desk support.

My experiences at Dell and Avista honed my skills in working under pressure and adapting to diverse professional environments. They taught me the importance of understanding each user's unique role, allowing me to anticipate and address their specific IT needs effectively.

Joining the City of Lewiston, I was confronted with a challenging IT environment. The systems were outdated, with failing backups and a lack of integration. It was a demanding period, but through long days and nights, I was able to rebuild and modernize the infrastructure. My efforts led to significant improvements, including a reduced technical footprint and a more centralized and integrated approach to our operations. We also shifted towards SaaS solutions, balancing capital and operational expenses more effectively.

During this period of stabilizing the IT environment, I was entrusted with the role of Security Advisor, addressing concerns about data security and potential breaches. I developed and implemented a comprehensive, layered security strategy that enhanced our protective measures while maintaining organizational flexibility. This role also involved preparing presentations for directors and securing funding for the security plan.

My involvement in several security conferences across the state expanded my knowledge and skills, soon leading me to share my practical insights with industry leaders. This experience not only affirmed my technical expertise but also showcased my ability to communicate complex IT concepts effectively to a diverse audience.

My collaboration with AlienVault, a Texas-based Security Event and Information Management platform, led to the development of innovative VPN monitoring solutions with behavioral analytics, enhancing protection and alert mechanisms. Recognized for my field expertise, AlienVault invited me to share my experiences and proposed solutions at their annual kick-off meeting. My contributions were significant, with my suggestions being integrated into their platform over four years, culminating in the at&t acquisition.

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My influence in the IT community extends beyond my direct work. I've mentored and consulted colleagues who have advanced to significant roles within their companies, often seeking my guidance on security, resource management, budgeting, and presentation strategies. My expertise has been sought by neighboring counties for training and developing their IT staff. Notably, in 2018, I played a pivotal role in the technical overhaul at the Nez Perce County Airport during crucial administrative transitions, affirming my position as a driving force in IT leadership within the community.

In 2017, I refocused my company to handle various clients and consulting projects, and in 2019, I established a second company to provide internet services to the Lewiston and Genesee communities. This venture was successfully sold in 2021 to a partner provider, yielding a significant return for investors. The transition of my original company to new ownership over the past year has redirected my focus back to my career. Balancing this business, which grew from a hobby to a demanding enterprise, with my personal life goals led to a strategic decision in 2020 to prioritize my professional pursuits.

My career is characterized by a unique ability to adapt to various industries, offering technical problem-solving skills to my clients. I excel in environments that demand technical oversight and bridging the gap between leadership and technical teams. My track record demonstrates a proficiency in public speaking, engaging with diverse groups, understanding complex security needs, and efficiently managing resources and budgets.