

Q&A: New Novell CEO in all-out Linux push

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Novell's new CEO Ronald Hovsepian and current CTO Jeffrey Jaffe have a lot to talk about, as the company refocuses on open-source software following an executive shakeup in June. Both executives gave some insights on Novell's strategy to use the majority of its resources - support, marketing, sales, product development and some \$1.4 billion in cash reserves - to become a full-fledged Linux company. The CEO and CTO also talked about why everyone should have a Linux desktop pilot running. (The following is an edited transcript.)

What will change at Novell now that you've moved into the CEO post?

Hovsepian: [There are] three basic things we need to do stronger as a corporation. One is simplification. By that I mean we just have to drive a level of simplification into our business processes and our business model. We have room to improve there dramatically in the way we work with our partners and the way we run the business for our customer - really being very customer-oriented in terms of simplification.

The second piece is focus. Under focus I think of it in terms of market segments and customer segments - bringing more focus and prioritization into those pieces as to what we need to do inside the company as a second dimension.

The third aspect of it is execution. We made a statement to Wall Street that we would deliver 12% to 15% operating income by exit fourth quarter of 2008. We have to deliver on our commitments. We have to deliver on our product commitments. We have to deliver on our financial commitments. And we have to deliver on our employee commitments.

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