

## Executive Spotlight with Tom Patterson



Photo of Tom Patterson

**Tom Patterson**

*CEO*

[Command Information](#)



In the 03/08/2007 edition of ExecutiveBiz we had a chance to catch up with **Tom Patterson**, CEO of **Command Information**.

Tom Patterson is the founder and chief executive officer of Command Information a company focused on IPv6 solutions. We catch up with Tom on the latest at Command Information, what's been accomplished with IPv6, and what most people don't know about IPv6.

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*ExecutiveBiz:* **What is your background?**

*Tom Patterson:* IPv6 first became an industry standard in the 1990s, when I was IBM's chief eCommerce strategist. I helped to form the IPv6 Business Council in 2004, and started Command Information, the largest IPv6 solutions provider, in 2006.

*ExecutiveBiz:* **What's happening at Command Information most people would not know?**

*Tom Patterson:* 2007 has seen the talk of the mandate really transform into discussions of the mission, with a lot of organizations starting to take advantage of the features and functionality of IPv6. We've grown to over 300 employees, and today we've got numerous IPv6 projects under way in our four different divisions. Our consulting group is helping to design global systems that leverage IPv6 that will be deployed this year. Command Labs, our research and development arm, is actually building applications to take advantage of the abilities and peer-to-peer factors that are built inside IPv6. We're helping large corporations and the government to see where the return on investment will be.

*ExecutiveBiz:* **What's the coolest thing that you've seen accomplished by IPv6?**

*Tom Patterson:* There's really quite a bit. There are a lot of things that we as a society have wanted to do for a long time, things that have been promised by the technology community, and yet we've been unable to actually make them work. Things like convergence in our homes and car-to-car communications. To that end, we just launched 'Veesix™,' America's first IPv6-networked car. It is a mobile lab that demonstrates today how cars will be able to communicate with other vehicles on the roads, infrastructure, organizations and companies, your home and cell phones. They'll be able to do a lot more with the same type of vehicles we have today.

*ExecutiveBiz:* **What would keep an organization from experiencing IPv6?**

*Tom Patterson:* The number one thing we've seen in the past is the lack of education. Once people come through our training centers, or visit our research and education labs, they tend to get on the bandwagon. They want the return on investments that we can unlock.

*ExecutiveBiz:* **What are the pitfalls of IPv6 that you've seen?**

*Tom Patterson:* There are certain groups who are trying to do it alone, or just by reading a book, and there are risks to going that way. Whenever you introduce a new technology, especially something fundamental like the data network layer, you need to understand what that means to your information security and to do that without taking into account security is a mistake. It just takes a little education to figure out the right way to take advantage of it. Our clients are able to leverage the fact that we've done this repeatedly, and literally, written the book(s).

*ExecutiveBiz:* **What is the biggest cost of implementing IPv6?**

*Tom Patterson:* Much of the hardware and software cost is already built in to the product or service they are buying. The real cost is time; taking the time to figure out what this means to the organization. We work with commercial and federal clients to analyze their mission and determine how best to use IPv6 to get there. We look for the best things to put onto v6, it's not an all or nothing deal. There's always a roadmap that gives you the best return.

*ExecutiveBiz:* **What trends do you see in the requests that you're getting for information and communication for IPv6?**

*Tom Patterson:* There's a tremendous thirst for knowledge right now. Unfortunately, IPv6 is from a technical level, very complicated. We're seeing a lot of requests for technical information. We have a white paper on our Web site ([www.CommandInformation.com](http://www.CommandInformation.com)) that addresses many of these questions. We see business and Government operations people calling to ask "how can this help our organization?" Specifically, our fastest growing sector is our IPv6 application development group, which is able to build v6 applications that cost less and do more, simply by leveraging the smarter network underneath.

*ExecutiveBiz:* **What is something most people don't know about IPv6?**

*Tom Patterson:* The biggest misconception is the incorrect focus on the quantity of IP addresses. If we simply continue to use the Internet in the same way, the number of addresses will not be an issue. What is changing is that we want to use the Internet in a mobile environment, that we want to connect with billions of new phones and sensors in our homes, offices, and cars, and we want to do it all in a safe, secure and private fashion. Really, most people don't care about the quantity of IP addresses. The real magic is discovered once you drill into this - it's cheaper and faster to set up and manage a network that uses IPv6. Users can anticipate the real-world things like laptop portability from office to office, and from homes to Starbucks, and account for those changes. We are social creatures and we want to create social networks to be able to communicate with each other in our daily lives. IPv6 offers the ability to do all of this better, faster and cheaper.

*ExecutiveBiz:* **What is something most people don't know about you?**

*Tom Patterson:* I think everybody knows that I'm really passionate about getting IPv6 adopted the right way in America, but coaching my eight year old son Will's sports teams is the highlight of my life.