

SIX DEGREES OF SYMPHONY

# Contacts are Everything

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**with Gary Godshaw**

Chief Revenue Officer - Symphony

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**2021**

A network diagram consisting of numerous white dots of varying sizes connected by thin white lines, forming a complex web of connections. The diagram is overlaid on the lower right portion of the page, partially obscuring the silhouettes of people.



by **Michael Imeson**

Senior Content Editor  
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with **Gary Godshaw**

Chief Revenue Officer  
- Symphony

**The acquisition of StreetLinx means that Symphony now offers the most complete and secure directory of personal contacts in the capital markets space. Gary Godshaw, former CEO of StreetLinx and now Chief Revenue Officer at Symphony, explains what it all means. Interview by Michael Imeson.**

Personal contacts are vital in business. The old saying “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know” still holds true. Not entirely true, of course – you do need to have some facts at your fingertips – but being able to get in touch quickly and easily with your clients, suppliers, counterparties, and other key stakeholders is essential.

That explains why Symphony’s leadership team were pleased to acquire StreetLinx, the New York-based counterparty mapping platform, in August 2021. The acquisition adds over 200 institutional counterparties to the more than 1,000 institutions already served by Symphony, creating the most complete and secure verified directory in the financial markets. Symphony’s over half a million users now have access to an even wider spectrum of “identity-verified” investment professionals, including portfolio managers, traders, research analysts and salespeople.



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– Gary Godshaw, Symphony

Gary Godshaw, former CEO and co-founder of StreetLinx, and now chief revenue officer, believes an up-to-date verified directory – “verified” in the sense that users know the contact information is accurate – is a key tool in markets as it increases efficiency and reduces risk. StreetLinx is in the process of being integrated with the Symphony directory, but the original version will continue to operate separately for the time being.



“We are taking a carbon copy of the StreetLinx product, moving it over as an app extension in Symphony and repurposing it,” says Gary. “We will run two products for now: the Symphony version of StreetLinx, and StreetLinx as a standalone platform.”

StreetLinx was founded in 2018 to modernize the exchange of organizational data and drive better connectivity between trusted counterparties, especially between sell-side and buy-side institutions.

In a short span of time it attracted over 130 buy-side firms and almost 60 Dealers, garnering the attention of Symphony’s top management.



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## Why is StreetLinx so important?

Large organizations struggle to maintain up to date contact records across their counterparties. Gary envisioned the idea for StreetLinx while at Goldman Sachs in New York, where he ran a fixed income cross asset sales team. He oversaw more than 20 salespeople covering 400 clients across six main product areas. In his view, relying on “hundreds of touch-points around the globe” to maintain an organized contact database was a “flawed process that didn’t solve any problems for our salespeople. They already know who they’re talking to.”

The concept was simple - instead of expending all the resources required to map and maintain external organizations, firms could map themselves and then swap with one another. He and co-founder Patrick Keneally left Goldman Sachs to set up StreetLinx, relying on early adopting buy and sell-side clients to shape the solution. The rest, as they say, is history.



# How does StreetLinx work?

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“It’s an opt-in platform, which means we obtain permission and direction from each firm to map their organization,” says Gary. “We collect structured and unstructured data from their internal directory, sales coverage system and research platform to create a list of all relevant staff, areas of coverage and seniority. It’s structured in their own nomenclature but we map it to common taxonomies.”

In other words, StreetLinx standardizes organizational information which is then made securely available to trusted counterparties. There are entitlement controls for bilateral sharing between counterparties. A Symphony alert bot keeps the buy and sell-side up to date on any changes.

“Data protection rules posed some early hurdles, which we overcame. We are compliant because we follow all data privacy laws, we have been certified under the EU-US and Swiss-US Privacy Shield Frameworks and our processes have been fully vetted and tested.”

# What are the Benefits?

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“It standardizes organizational information.”

– Gary Godshaw, Symphony

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The benefits of a comprehensive and secure verified directory are clear. Counterparties can easily and quickly identify and contact the right people, reducing the number of missed trading opportunities, reducing errors and facilitating the resolution of trade exceptions.

The focus is on front office functions – trading, global market leadership, research, sales people and so on. Job titles are included, but these can vary from firm to firm. More importantly, the directory gives job functions, which are standardized using common terms so there is no ambiguity about what each person does, especially helpful



when looking across firms. Each person's specific area of interest is mapped, according to asset class, industry sector focus, regional coverage and stock ticker interest – their interest in specific securities.

StreetLinx has proved so successful because, as Gary jokes, "my competition is Frankenstein spreadsheets which are always well out of date."



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**“Being entrusted to hold and manage a directory of industry identities is hugely important for us.”**

– Gary Godshaw, Symphony

## What makes StreetLinx an “agent of change”?

There is no denying that StreetLinx is a transformational force in people terms. “We bring sell-side and buy-side people together,” says Gary. “We’re helping users from different firms get to the decision makers.”

It is also transformational in technology terms. StreetLinx brings an extra degree of flexibility, accuracy and detail to the Symphony platform. An indication of its flexibility, for example, is the fact that while it is being integrated with Symphony, the original version of StreetLinx will continue to operate separately for some time.

StreetLinx was founded to modernize the exchange of organizational data and create better connections between trading counterparties. While Gary and his team realized this was a difficult problem and knew how to solve it, their role in StreetLinx’s creation was only part of the story. The other part was the role played by senior executives in the firms listed on the platform, because without their willing participation and equal desire to address the issue this initiative could not have succeeded.

# Six Degrees of Symphony

“Six Degrees Of Symphony” is a thought leadership series featuring the agents of change that are transforming financial markets. Over the coming months we will be bringing you interviews, articles and insights from pioneers in Sell-Side, Buy-Side and Partner firms. Tackling the challenges and the opportunities of finance in a post-digital age.

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