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Computer Sciences Corp.

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Introduction

The American technology landscape has been continually reshaped by companies with a vision to adapt, innovate, and deliver solutions that transcend their time. Among these firms, Computer Sciences Corporation—known to generations simply as CSC—emerged as a pioneering force in the world of information technology services. Founded in 1959 with modest beginnings in Los Angeles, CSC’s trajectory would prove to be both extraordinary and emblematic of the rampant change and enduring possibilities of the digital age.

This book, *Computer Sciences Corp.: The Story of An American Company*, traces the remarkable journey of CSC from its origin as a two-man operation dedicated to building software tools, to its rise as a powerhouse in the consulting and IT services sector, and finally to its transformation and merger into DXC Technology. The narrative unfolds over nearly six decades, capturing not only the company’s milestones and business metamorphoses but also the wider currents of technological evolution, economic change, and shifts in corporate strategy. The story of CSC offers a window into how American ingenuity and bold leadership helped shape the global IT services landscape.

CSC’s saga is about much more than contracts won and revenues achieved. It is the story of a company that operated on the frontier of a nascent industry, taking risks on novel technologies, software applications, and markets. CSC was among the first to recognize that software—not hardware—would be at the core of the information revolution. Its early decision to focus on programming tools and its proprietary solutions, such as Computax, contributed to a legacy of innovation and collaboration with government agencies and Fortune 500 corporations alike. Its listing on a U.S. stock exchange set a precedent that acknowledged the value and viability of software services as a major business driver.

Throughout its history, CSC was marked by cycles of expansion and reinvention. Shaped by visionary leaders—founders Roy Nutt and Fletcher Jones, strategist Bill Hoover, and later, transformative managers like Van Honeycutt and Mike Lawrie—the company navigated the challenges of leadership transitions, changing technology paradigms, and shifting client demands. Its willingness to take bold steps, such as the diversification into commercial and international business or the strategic split of its government sector, often set the company apart from its peers. Perhaps most notably, CSC’s pattern of growth by acquisition—blending its culture with those of other organizations—allowed it to thrive and adapt in an industry defined by consolidation and disruption.

By examining CSC's service lines, customer relationships, and iconic projects, this book aims to illuminate the factors that drove the company's sustained relevance. From critical infrastructure systems for U.S. government agencies to the adoption of global cloud platforms and analytics, CSC's work influenced the operations of businesses and governments alike. Its journey, reflecting the evolution of the broader technology sector, mirrors the rise of IT outsourcing, the advent of digital transformation, and the increasing complexity of enterprise computing.

Today, the legacy of Computer Sciences Corp. endures in the form of DXC Technology, a global leader in the next generation of IT services. Its history is vital not only for those interested in the evolution of technology and business, but also for those seeking to understand how vision, adaptability, and daring can enable a company to redefine itself in the face of ongoing change. As we explore CSC's influence, achievements, missteps, and ultimate transformation, we gain not only a clearer picture of the past but also critical insights into the future of enterprise technology and the enduring spirit of innovation that drives American industry.

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CHAPTER ONE: Founding Pioneers: Roy Nutt and Fletcher Jones

In the spring of 1959, the burgeoning field of computing was still largely a niche domain, dominated by clunky mainframes and the highly specialized technicians who could coax them into action. Software, as a distinct industry, was barely a whisper. Yet, amidst this nascent landscape, two young computer engineers, Roy Nutt and Fletcher R. Jones, saw a future that others had not yet fully grasped. With an audacious vision and a mere \$100 in starting capital between them, they set out to establish Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) in Los Angeles, California.

Their timing was impeccable. The computer industry, though in its infancy, was poised for rapid expansion. New computer models were emerging from manufacturers like IBM and Honeywell, but these powerful machines often arrived without the crucial software needed to make them truly useful. Nutt and Jones recognized this glaring gap in the market: a pressing need for expertly crafted software programming tools such as assemblers and compilers.

Roy Nutt, the technical half of this formidable duo, brought a wealth of programming prowess to the venture. A graduate of Trinity College with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, Nutt had already made significant contributions to the world of computing. Prior to CSC, he had worked at United Aircraft Corp., where he developed the Symbolic Assembly Program (SAP) for the IBM 704 mainframe. This assembler is widely regarded today as one of the most successful individual programming efforts of the 1950s. His reputation was further cemented by his involvement with the IBM team that developed FORTRAN, one of the earliest and most influential high-level programming languages, where he was responsible for developing the FORMAT command.

Nutt's expertise extended beyond theoretical contributions; he was a builder. He was responsible for developing the first commercial compiler for Honeywell, known as FACT (Fully Automatic Commercial Translator). This practical experience and his deep understanding of how to solve complex technical problems with innovative software solutions gave CSC an immediate and considerable advantage. He was the quiet technical genius, the architect of the code that would power the machines of tomorrow.

Fletcher R. Jones, on the other hand, was the entrepreneurial fire, the business and marketing force behind CSC's early success. Born in Bryan, Texas, Jones had a background in mathematics and had managed a divisional computer center at North

American Aviation Corp. before co-founding CSC. He possessed a keen understanding of the market and a remarkable ability to seize opportunities. Jones saw beyond the technical intricacies and recognized the vast commercial potential of software services. He was the spirited visionary, adept at pitching the necessity of software to companies that had already invested heavily in hardware.

The partnership between Nutt's technical brilliance and Jones's business acumen was, in essence, the perfect alchemy for a software company in its nascent stage. They understood that the future of computing lay not just in the powerful hardware, but in the intelligent software that would unleash its capabilities. The initial focus on building programming tools for major computer manufacturers proved to be a shrewd strategy, quickly earning them recognition and respect within the industry.

The early days of software development were a far cry from the sleek, agile processes of today. In the 1950s, programming was a meticulous and often manual endeavor, involving machine-level instructions and a direct interface with the hardware. High-level languages like FORTRAN were just beginning to emerge, simplifying the coding process but still requiring immense precision and technical understanding. Computers were prohibitively expensive, costing significantly more to run per hour than a programmer's salary, which meant that efficiency and compact code were paramount. It was in this demanding environment that Nutt and Jones carved out their niche.

Their commitment to technical excellence and their ability to deliver high-quality work quickly gained CSC a reputation that set it apart from other budding software firms. As the 1950s drew to a close, and the 1960s began, the seeds planted by Roy Nutt and Fletcher Jones with their modest \$100 investment were already beginning to sprout, laying the groundwork for what would become a global leader in information technology services.

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