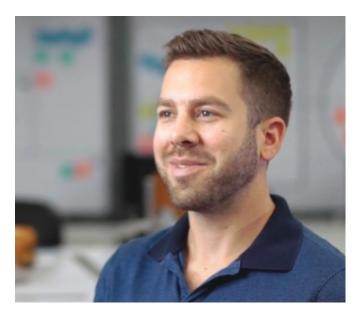# Q&A WITH BRENDON ALLEN,
FARPOINTE DATA'S NEW DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

Farpointe recently announced the appointment of Brendon Allen as its new Director of Engineering. Allen brings over 16 years of experience in engineering and security technology, promising to further advance Farpointe's innovation and product development. Brendon took time out of his busy schedule to sit down with _The Reader_ to discuss his background, his plans for pedaling Farpointe forward on the engineering front, and his thoughts on technologies driving innovation in the security industry.

What was your first job in high school?

I had a few odd jobs in high school. Mostly manual labor, like tearing apart old, dilapidated mobile homes for scrap metal. It was difficult and dirty work. My first "real" job was at McDonald's, and I can still make a perfect ice cream cone. The biggest takeaway I took from those early jobs was that they weren't something I wanted to do forever, which fueled my desire to further my education.

How did you develop an interest in engineering?

I was always strong in math and science. Honestly, I didn't know many people who went to college, let alone anyone who was an engineer. When I decided to pursue engineering, I wasn't entirely sure what I was getting into. During my senior year in high school, they passed around a list of college majors and average starting salaries and electrical engineering caught my attention. I decided to attend Purdue, a top-tier engineering school in my home state of Indiana.

How did you get your start in the security industry?

Right after college, I landed a role at Ingersoll Rand Security Technologies. They had a great program for new graduates, rotating us through various roles and functions over two years.
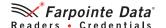
This appealed to me because it allowed me to explore different areas of the business early on and discover what I was passionate about. The security industry was particularly intriguing because it involves a broad range of engineering disciplines—mechanical, electrical, embedded systems, software, and more. It was the perfect fit for someone who enjoys working on complex, multifaceted products.

How did you get your start with Farpointe?

Back in 2017, dormakaba acquired the BEST Access business from Stanley Security, where I was working at the time. I had been working in the electronic lock space for several years and was already working on project for dormakaba. That's when I began working with some of the people at Farpointe—also a dormakaba company. After that project was completed, I spent a few years working on larger automated products for dormakaba: turnstiles, revolving doors, and other automated access products. Earlier this year, Farpointe's Vice President and General Manager, Scott Lindley, contacted me about an engineering postion opening up with the upcoming retirement of its long-time Director of Engineering, Kirk Bierach.

As someone new to the company—what will be your approach to advancing Farpointe's innovation and product development?

While Farpointe is very strong in the 125-kHz proximity space, it is critical to help our customers migrate to more secure technologies. We already have some great options in place with our CONEKT® line of readers and credentials, which use smart card and mobile credential technologies. However, we are seeing a significant shift in the industry toward more secure and open credential standards. We must compete in that space, as well as equip ourselves to lead with the emerging Apple and Google wallet credentials. There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise within Farpointe and dormakaba that we can leverage to deliver world class solutions.

Speaking of technology, what do you see as the most significant technology development currently driving the access control industry?

I believe two major developments are shaping the future of our industry, and they're likely to intersect. First, large tech players like Apple and Google, with their wallet solutions, are transforming mobile access. We need to develop products and services that support our partners' business models to efficiently bring this technology to market. Second, the emergence of standards around public key cryptographic credentials—such as PKOC, PK-PACS, and others—is becoming increasingly important. Although these concepts are new to the physical security industry, they've been well-established in IT for a long time. I think mobile and public key technologies will drive significant innovation in our industry.

What is one of your proudest accomplishments?

After BEST was acquired by dormakaba, I was given the opportunity to build-out a team. I was able to hire incredible people who developed some really great technology and products. What I was most proud of, however, was the quality of the people, the dynamics of the team, and the fun we had working together. I hope to recreate some of that at Farpointe. I already met many of the wonderful people in the business and look forward to working with the entire team.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time when you're not engineering?

My main hobby outside of work is mountain biking. I started around 2018 when I lived in Indiana, but it isn't the least bit mountainous. Now living in California, I have a few more options nearby. I love biking because it is a great excuse to get out in nature, get some exercise, get the adrenaline pumping, and travel to new places. For an engineer, there's also plenty of gear to geek-out on.

Who is a person that you really admire?

Someone I admire is Teddy Roosevelt. In his early life, he had a lot of physical ailments that he pushed himself to overcome, exceeding many of the expectations people had for him. He made vigorous exercise a daily routine and even as president, would box and wrestle people in the White House. He also established five of our national parks and was passionate about environmental conservation. After his presidency, he went on a scientific expedition to the Amazon, making a dangerous trek down the River of Doubt—now known as Roosevelt River. His staggering array of interests and accomplishments, as well as the challenges he overcame, form an inspiring figure.

When not working on innovative security technology, Brendon can often be found mountain biking the hills of California.

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