

# About the Author

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Founder, former President and Chief Executive Officer of Action Instruments, Jim Pinto is not your typical successful entrepreneur. Instead of retiring to a life of golf and leisure in 1998 when—at age 60—he sold his 30-year-old company to Eurotherm in England, Jim decided to have fun being an outspoken industry maverick. By then he had already earned a reputation as “the poet laureate of the Instrumentation Industry” for his unabashed, widely publicized poems likening automation industry giants to *Alice in Wonderland* characters (see Section 5).

Instead, Jim decided to further develop his “tell-it-like-it-is” skills and become a highly visible Industrial Automation Commentator, Technology Futurist, Angel Investor, Speaker, Writer, Analyst and Consultant—all rolled into one.

Born and raised in India where he received his Masters degree in physics, Jim then moved to England for eight years. There, he worked as an electronics engineer, started a company—KPE Controls—with a friend at age 24, sold it four years later, and decided to move to the U.S. In 1968, he joined disk drive and computer maker Burroughs in Pasadena, Calif., then honed his business skills at a smaller company, Bissett-Berman, which moved him to San Diego—where he continues to nest.

One of Jim’s great strengths—which helps him to make fearless prognostications—is his vast network of industry contacts, developed over many years. For example, to assure success before founding Action Instruments with little more than a plan and a shoestring in 1972, he first met with industry giants Bill Hewlett, David Packard, John Fluke, and Digital Equipment Corp. founder Ken Olson. One of Jim’s proudest moments happened in 1993 when people-oriented Action was named by INC magazine as one of the “Employers of the Year—Workplaces Employees Love!”

Jim was named *California Small Business Person of the Year* for the State of California in 1980. Jim has been featured in many books and national journals: INC—*A Call to Action* - November ‘83; Industry Week—*A Manager for All Seasons*—June ‘92; Esquire—*Re-defining the Role of the Employee*—May ‘83. He is featured prominently in Joel Kotkin’s *California Inc.* and is mentioned in Naisbitt’s *Re-inventing the Corporation as a pioneer in participative management.*

By the time Jim sold the company to Eurotherm in 1998, Action’s first product, Action Pak—plug-in building blocks handling all manner of measurement and control functions—had an installed base totaling some two million modules and exceeding \$100 million. When Invensys acquired Eurotherm later in 1998, Jim bailed, deciding Invensys was too large and structured for his own taste.

Jim has traveled widely throughout the world, and has significant experience in the comparative study of American, European and Japanese business cultures. He serves as an international consultant in strategic business planning, marketing, sales channel development, technology planning and acquisition strategy. He is a Member of the Association of Professional Futurists and the World Future Society.

His interests include technology futures (he is a popular speaker on the subject); technology investments (Managing Partner at AngelMoney.com); writing (for several webzines—including his own “JimPinto.com eNews”—journals and magazines); poetry (internationally published); music (piano, MIDI); chess (not a master, but he likes it); and the Internet. An avid web-surfer, Jim manages his own highly popular web site, JimPinto.com.

—Perry Marshall and Jim Strothman