

TO COMPETE IN TODAY'S MARKET, COMPANIES MUST UTILIZE DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS

VAI's CIO, Kevin Beasley, believes digital transformation will push software developers to go above and beyond for customers.

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Kevin Beasley has been CIO of software company VAI for more than three decades. The New York-headquartered firm offers fully integrated and cloud-based software solutions to businesses in retail, manufacturing and distribution industries.

In his role, Beasley oversees the company's technology strategy in conjunction with product development and internal information technology initiatives. He also has experience in enterprise resource planning, supply chain management, and warehouse management system consulting.

Here, he discusses how the acceleration of digital transformation will cause e-commerce and cloud-based applications to skyrocket, as well as the other tech trends he sees coming down the line.

Describe your role and your responsibilities in driving tech strategy.

As CIO of VAI for more than 30 years, I have been responsible for driving VAI's IT initiatives, including the product development and expansion of our enterprise resource planning suite, S2K Enterprise, and working closely with clients and account managers to ensure the product is serving the needs of companies.

VAI has always been at the forefront of innovation and it has been my goal to ensure our product line is utilising the latest technology developments to drive digital transformation for organisations in manufacturing, food, hard goods, retail, pharmaceutical and more.

Are you spearheading any major product or IT initiatives you can tell us about?

VAI has offered cloud deployment for our customers since 2009. Currently we're in another phase of expanding the cloud that will go into the second half of 2021. VAI also recently launched version 6.2 of S2K Enterprise On Cloud this past fall, which built upon our cloud-based enterprise resource planning suite to add more mobile capabilities, deeper analytics tools, ongoing e-commerce platform enhancements and more.

The last year has been extremely challenging for many organisations. At the same time, we were proud to be able to assist and meet the needs of our customers and continuously provide the digital roadmap companies need to stay resilient in today's market.

How big is your team?

Headquartered in New York with additional locations throughout

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the US, the various locations service our customers in many ways including sales and marketing, project management and deployment, and research and development.

Product development is done through internal resources, while some security scanning, monitoring and penetration testing is outsourced in addition to internal resources working on functions such as those.

What are your thoughts on digital transformation?

Even though digital transformation is not a new concept in the technology community, several organisations are still trying to perfect their digital transformation roadmaps and many are only getting started, especially amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Support Silicon Republic To compete in today's market and meet the current demand of customers for seamless experiences, companies must utilise data-driven insights and predictive analytics, and adopt a sophisticated e-commerce platform that can grow with the company.

On top of this, the transition to remote work offered a new layer of complexity and security concerns

for the operational abilities of many organisations. To allow collaboration for employees across different locations, companies have accelerated their digital transformation by moving to cloud-based applications that allow for remote work capabilities.

Going forward, e-commerce and cloud-based application adoption will skyrocket to accommodate the long-term impact of remote working, and this will push software developers to go above and beyond for customers to drive digital transformation.

What big tech trends do you believe are changing the future of work from an IT perspective?

Cloud computing is considered the biggest technology shaping the future of work, with mobile as a close second. The collaboration, analytics, asset tracking and video-conferencing tools that companies are adopting to enable remote work are all powered by the cloud.

As we move into 2021, cloud-based software deployments will be widespread throughout many industries, as well as a hybrid-cloud model for companies who need some specific workloads to remain on-premise. The scalability and speed of the cloud will allow for more seamless experiences

and tools that increase productivity, especially for remote workers.

Alternatively, cloud-based software is powering those in the supply chain who rely on data-driven applications and modelling to enable smarter warehouses and fulfil orders.

We see the cloud taking over across the market, and we don't anticipate that slowing down anytime soon. In addition, with 5G deployments well on their way, IoT will finally be able to deliver on many of the capabilities that many people expect.

In terms of security, what are your thoughts on how we can better protect data?

Since the Covid-19 pandemic began, we've seen a spike in phishing and ransomware attacks, resulting in many infected personal and company-owned computers and phones. Some attackers are using the pandemic as bait to impersonate trusted brands, and businesses and end-users alike are being targeted.

The work-from-home structure has dramatically altered the cybersecurity landscape. This should be a wake-up call for everyone. We saw companies



that were well prepared for a cyberattack and able to fairly accurately assess the situation, and others who need to prepare better for the future.

Going forward, the cybersecurity landscape has to be more

proactive and use more budgetary discretion to shore up defences. What has been learned from the work-from-home model is that older protocols need to be retired, such as server message block and other land-based protocols.

Newer cloud-based technology can replace this safely. Businesses should also test deployment methods and the scale of what is needed to function well and safely in the event of any kind of disruptive scenario.