

IBM i ERP VENDOR MODERNIZES FOR SUCCESS

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The IBM i software vendors are one of the big reasons this platform, which is built around business applications, has enjoyed 25 years of greatness. The majority of these vendors are much more oriented on the midmarket than the enterprise, which happens to be where the greatest number of IBM i users do what they do. One of those vendors is VAI, the ERP software company with a healthy customer base of midsize manufacturers, distributors, and retailers.

As 2013 draws to a close, VAI is on course to close out the year with an annual growth rate in the range of 15 to 20 percent, with expectations of a similar gain in 2014. Applications designed for specific industry verticals in the IBM midrange have made VAI successful, but continuing to innovate and solve workflow problems and cost inefficiencies using mobile and cloud technology are what drives growth. Forecasting the future of

VAI involves building, not resting, on the past and the present.

To implement new technologies that go into product innovation, VAI is tapping into the creativity of existing employees who know the business well, while also expanding its workforce. According to a press release VAI released in mid-November, the New York-based company increased its workforce by 15 percent in 2013 and it has plans to hire additional ERP and Java programmers and Web designers in 2014. The company also plans to hire sales and technical support staff next year. The new hires will fill positions in the New York headquarters as well as in the company's Florida, Illinois, and California branches.

The September launch of VAI's Web-based S2K Smart Center, which combines mobile, cloud, and social media, as well as analytics and customer resource management, demonstrates

the company's commitment to innovation and helping its customers remain competitive against modern tech-savvy challengers that are building market share with applications that offer anytime-anywhere computing on mobile devices.

"We've not only used S2K Smart Center to integrate our analytics and other external components, but it also gives us a platform at the UI and controller levels for future enhancements to come down the road," VAI CIO Kevin Beasley said in an October article in Four Hundred Stuff. "ERP is more than just your basic orders and manufacturing, product scheduling and shop floor."

Applications that offer anytime-anywhere computing on any mobile device are expected by many businesses and that expectation is going to grow. Cloud computing is another expected option for many companies. They will pick and



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choose which apps to run in the cloud, but certain programs will be moved sooner rather than later. CRM is a prime example. VAI expanded and upgraded its data center in anticipation of customer demand for cloud-based options that make the most sense. VAI is prepared to deploy its entire S2K ERP flagship product on premise,

as a cloud-based software-as-a-service, or with both the software and the hardware in the cloud-platform-as-a-service style.

“This web based initiative is definitely a game changer for VAI,” said CEO Bob Vormittag. “We will continue to offer Web-based products that will run on

any mobile device and have a continued focus on complete automation of the enterprise in our future development. Our goal is to help customers maintain maximum efficiencies throughout the organization and utilize the power of the Web and mobility to expand their business operations.”



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