

# INTERVIEW

## CIO SPOTLIGHT: KEVIN BEASLEY - VAI

What business or technology initiatives will be most significant in driving IT investments in your organisation in the coming year? "... our ERP technologies including predictive analytics, mobile, blockchain, and AI as they are becoming an increasingly important priority of the supply chain..."

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**Name:**

Kevin Beasley

**Company:**

VAI

**Job title:**

CIO

**Date started current role:**

1988

**Location:**

Ronkonkoma, New York

Kevin Beasley oversees VAI's technology strategy in conjunction with product development and the internal information technology initiatives that support the goals of the company. Beasley has decades of ERP, SCM, and WMS consulting experience and extensive experience in the IT space.

**What was your first job?**

While in college, I worked in commercial graphic arts at a company we acquired. I later became the data processing manager and then leading up to vice president. In my first role, I operated computerised camera equipment.

**Did you always want to work in IT?**

I always worked with computer equipment and programming, from high school and college through the present. I did however initially seek to be a quantitative analyst, but a cooperate acquisition moved me into IT.

**What was your education? Do you hold any certifications? What are they?**

College initially for quantitative analytics and then a switch to computer science. I have many certifications from IBM and others in the field.

**Explain your career path. Did you take any detours? If so, discuss.**

Initial plans to go into the U.S. military which changed when I took a position as vice president.

**What business or technology initiatives will be most significant in driving IT investments in your organisation in the coming year?**

Continuing and ongoing research and development on our ERP technologies including predictive analytics, mobile, blockchain, and AI as they are becoming an increasingly important priority of the supply chain, helping manufacturers improve production through increased visibility and insights. As the supply chain continues to evolve, ERP is a significant driver of IT investment as the technology



allows enterprises to gain better visibility into the supply chain and streamline operations. Companies within the distribution, logistics, and manufacturing sectors have complex processes, and the implementation of advanced technologies and tools such as cloud, mobile, and ERP are helping companies devote more time, energy, and resources to the actual development of high-quality products. In turn, ERP investments are driving significant growth and we'll continue to see this trend in the coming year.

**What are the CEO's top priorities for you in the coming year?**

How do you plan to support the business with IT? In the coming year, our company's main priority is maintaining and strengthening security and infrastructure for our enterprise and customers. In addition, IT continues to drive innovative ERP and supply chain solutions for our customers, because of the ongoing supply chain shortages. IT is the backbone of our clients' strategy and VAI's S2K Enterprise family of products works to alleviate the unique challenges our customers face within the supply chain. This year, one of our top priorities remains helping our clients navigate the ongoing supply

chain disruptions with digital transformation tools and cloud-based ERP. IT solutions have always been central to our work in helping customers better manage their products and distribution methods.

**Does the conventional CIO role include responsibilities it should not hold? Should the role have additional responsibilities it does not currently include?**

The CIO role has evolved in the last decade, and specifically during the pandemic. Much of my day-to-day involves overseeing VAI IT teams in the implementation and management of projects while ensuring our customers are secured whether on premise or in our cloud.

**Are you leading a digital transformation? If so, does it emphasise customer experience and revenue growth or operational efficiency? If both, how do you balance the two?**

Digital transformation has been ongoing and is important for companies across the board to ensure that systems are compatible and scalable, especially as technology grows more sophisticated. A strong digital transformation strategy

covers all bases to align operational efficiencies with an effective customer experience. If done correctly, digital transformation can lend itself to both goals. By incorporating a digital transformation strategy that prioritises operational efficiency, strong customer experience relationships and revenue growth should follow.

**Describe the maturity of your digital business. For example, do you have KPIs to quantify the value of IT?**

Through our S2K analytics applications, whether through pre-canned KPI's or customer created KPI's the value of IT can be quantified.

**What does good culture fit look like in your organisation? How do you cultivate it?**

Part of VAI's mission is to be exceptional IT service partners for our customers, and to accomplish this goal, we have exceptional internal teams to do this. This means cultivating a culture that feels like a family, while also inspiring inquisitiveness while offering continuous support for co-workers as well as clients. To attract great applicants, we present ourselves as a company with sophisticated experience, flexibility, and a strong support system.



**What roles or skills are you finding (or anticipate to be) the most difficult to fill?**

We are seeing a shift in tenure, as employees today are exploring different paths at different locations and testing or reevaluating what career they really want. Especially regarding the changing dynamics brought on by the pandemic, things such as remote work and other perks are no longer a want but rather, a desire.

**What's the best career advice you ever received?**

Be inquisitive and open-minded.

**Do you have a succession plan? If so, discuss the importance of and challenges with training up high-performing staff.**

The company has a succession plan in place.

**What advice would you give to aspiring IT leaders?**

Always be open to new ideas and maintain the learning curve with ongoing training and certifications throughout his/her career.

**What has been your greatest**

**career achievement?**

From March 2020 into 2021, I maintained full company operations from within the corporate headquarters, while company-wide work from home was enacted due to the Covid pandemic. During this time, I maintained the onsite servers, made sure all equipment was functioning properly, ran the shipping and delivery department, took care of external employee needs from within our headquarter location, and performed a multitude of daily, weekly, and monthly internal tasks to keep things running smoothly and efficiently.

**Looking back with 20:20 hindsight, what would you have done differently?**

Although my life would have been different had I acted upon other, various opportunities over the course of it, I believe in forging forward with the fullest intent and purpose, without thoughts of having done it differently. Being fully present in all my pursuits allows me to be my best, and I do not believe I would change

any thought, opportunity, or circumstance. It has led me here after all, and I'm grateful for all the challenges and opportunities that have served me in and outside of business through the years.

**What are you reading now?**

I enjoy works of nonfiction and can often be found reading or browsing through any technical article or book available. Outside of IT, things of historical nature such as, A Brief History of Earth, and some recent anthropological and archaeological discoveries are always an enjoyable read.

**Most people don't know that I...**

used to work in commercial construction during high school and college and I can build a house from the foundation up.

**In my spare time, I like to...**

exercise in my home gym, take day trips across Long Island, read, swim, cook, and spend time with friends and family. .

**Ask me to do anything but...**

I do it all!

