

Change the Customer Conversation



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Transformation, flexibility and changing the customer conversation is the name of the game. In this interview, Mike Walkey, senior vice president of strategic partners and alliances at Hitachi Vantara, talked about the opportunities for Hitachi Vantara partners in this ever-changing marketplace.

Q Where are the opportunities for Hitachi Vantara partners?

There's never been a better time to be a Hitachi Vantara partner. More than ever, we are welcoming partners across the sales cycle and across our portfolio—wherever they have skills, competencies, solutions and services or business objectives. This can mean continued engagement in the core data center business that we are known for or new collaboration in expanding areas like data analytics, data governance, cloud services, IoT and smart cities.

Much like Hitachi Vantara, we know the businesses of our partners are also transforming. We see traditional resellers building up IoT and analytics practices. Similarly, systems integrator and ISV partners are making new bets around specific vertical industries, such as financial services, manufacturing, transportation and healthcare, deepening their expertise and offering high-value solutions and services.

Our Hitachi Vantara Partner Program offers the kind of flexibility and agility required while this transformation occurs. Our partners pick the specialty, the delivery model, the target markets and the engagement based on their business goals and objectives and we will engage with them to accelerate the achievement of these goals.

Q What are you telling partners to focus on?

Today, every customer wants to know how they can leverage the power of their data to make informed business decisions and/or secure a competitive advantage. The conversation has changed and we encourage our partners to assess how they can best change the conversation around data and transformation as they add more value with new services and solutions and operate in different buying centers and lines of business.

As a data company, Hitachi Vantara is focused on what we call our Data Stairway to Value. Only Hitachi Vantara is positioned to help customers store, enrich, activate and monetize their data.

- **Store:** Customers are looking to store, manage and protect data at the lowest cost and the right services

levels across traditional environments and private/public/hybrid cloud solutions. This is mission-critical.

- **Enrich:** Customers are looking to reduce data silos; ensure regulatory compliance; and access, correlate and leverage data and analytics insights to general new “context” that makes their data more intelligent.
- **Activate:** Customers are looking to integrate and orchestrate their data assets and leverage advanced analytics to generate actionable insights for every interaction.
- **Monetize:** Customers are looking for outcomes that capture the full economic value of their data inside their organization and beyond. Often, IoT plays a critical role here.

Partners should focus on the areas in which they have skills, competencies, solutions and services. Some partners have very successful businesses built around data management, data governance and data analytics—all areas that we expect to continue to grow with the ongoing growth in data volume. Other partners will want to take advantage of our newer services and solutions that powerfully combine our operational technology (OT) and IT expertise, such as manufacturing insights and predictive maintenance.

Q How do you handle the complexity of bringing in multiple partners to address a customer's business objective?

Engagement with multiple partners to address the customer's desired business outcomes does not need to be complex. More often than not, each partner has a role to play based on their skills, competencies, delivery models (e.g. Resell, Manage, Deliver or Create), services and solutions. The customer and its desired business outcomes should be at the core.

The teaming framework is critical for success, whether with our partner ecosystem or our other Hitachi entities. Our partner program greatly advances our abilities to engage and collaborate with our ecosystem to solve a customer need regardless if it is one or five partners. ■