

Climbing the Data Stairway to Value

Partners are essential for success, says top executive.



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From morning to night, Hans-Peter Klaey, Chief Revenue Officer for Hitachi Vantara since October 2017, is laser focused on helping customers achieve tangible outcomes from their data. In this interview, Klaey talked about what sets Hitachi Vantara apart and the critical role partners play in the company's sales strategy and execution.

Q What makes Hitachi Vantara different from its competitors?

Klaey: Only Hitachi Vantara combines 100 years of operational technology (OT) experience with more than 60 years of IT experience to connect business, human and machine data to create solutions that drive benefits for businesses and society as a whole.

Only Hitachi Vantara can help our customers store, protect, enrich, activate and monetize their data—on-premise or as-a-service—using our innovative Data Stairway to Value. More than 85 percent of the Fortune Global 100 trust

Hitachi Vantara's data-driven solutions.

We are also a unique catalyst for intelligent industry innovation—allowing banks to better understand their customers, telecoms to analyze the wealth of data coming from IoT, hospitals to deliver better patient care, and businesses everywhere to deliver better outcomes.

Q How has the sales momentum changed since last year's formation of Hitachi Vantara?

Klaey: The creation of Hitachi Vantara and the unification of a

solution portfolio that includes data management, data intelligence, data governance, data analytics and IoT offerings has accelerated our sales momentum. Hitachi Vantara and its partners are winning new customers and new footprints in existing customers because of the value we can offer and the business outcomes we can help them achieve.

Q How has the role of the partner changed with the formation of Hitachi Vantara and the growth of its portfolio?

Klaey: Today's fast-paced, highly competitive, data-driven marketplace requires transformation. It requires

technologies, solutions and services to enable customers to realize the power of their data, but it also requires collaboration with trusted partners to broaden our reach into new customers or buying centers, extend our sales and solutions capabilities, grow our coverage and support our customers.

As we dive deeper into new strategic focus areas, like data analytics and IoT, partnerships with market makers and solution providers are ever more critical to expand our footprint, co-innovate and deliver the best possible outcomes for our customers.

Q How much of your product sales go through partners, and do you expect the number to grow in 2019?

Klaey: The majority of our product sales is through partners. We've seen tremendous momentum in the partner business this year, resulting in significant growth in both products and services sales through partners. We tie much of this to the changes we made in our partner program and the expanded offerings and opportunities available to our partners. As such, we anticipate this trend will continue into 2019.

Q Has the growth of Hitachi Vantara's data analytics, IoT and cloud in your service offerings lessened the emphasis on storage?

Klaey: No. Our core storage is foundational to our portfolio today

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and our vision for tomorrow, giving us strategic leverage within our account base and the opportunity to expand our relevance up the Data Stairway to Value and help customers store, enrich, activate and monetize their data. We are committed to the storage business and we continue to invest in our storage offerings, increasing funding and incremental engineering capacity to accelerate our storage roadmap for greater success.

Q Is Hitachi Vantara recruiting and onboarding new partners in newer focus areas such as cloud, data analytics and IoT?

Klaey: Yes. We absolutely continue to selectively recruit and onboard partners with the right expertise, solutions and services, particularly in data analytics, IoT and cloud services. We also continue to add partners in specific markets where we need coverage or in vertical markets where we see growth opportunities or customer requirements.

That said, we are not looking to create an over-distributed,

unwieldy ecosystem of partners. More often than not, this results in transactional relationships rather than collaborative partnerships and means smaller opportunities and less profitability for partners. None of this is desirable for Hitachi Vantara or its partners.

Q How important are partners to Hitachi Vantara's strategic path forward?

Klaey: Certainly, Hitachi Vantara has bold ambitions. We know that we cannot achieve these goals alone. For this reason, partners are top of mind from the time I wake up to the time I go to sleep because I know they are our recipe for success.

If we engage our partners, with their industry expertise, skills and capabilities, customer relationships and unique solutions and services, early in our opportunities, we can significantly increase our opportunities to win.

With collaboration, business planning and alignment with our partners, we can do more and that's exactly what we are going to do. ■