



Opportunity Knocks

A little more than a year ago, the formation of Hitachi Vantara was more than the combination of unique organizations to bring storage, data analytics and IoT into one portfolio. It also represented a massive opportunity to take a fresh and modern approach to partnership.

Case in point: the Hitachi Vantara partner program, introduced in April 2018, injects flexibility, agility and choice into the company's engagement with partners. It is centered around how Hitachi Vantara and its partners can offer value and the right solutions and services to deliver desired business outcomes to the customer.

An Emphasis on Business Outcomes

When Kimberly King took over as Hitachi Vantara's vice president of global partner strategy and programs in early 2018, her first priority was to align the program to the Hitachi Vantara strategy and to shift its focus from a transactional, hardware-based program to a value, outcome-based one.

"We are fully committed to our partners as highly valued contributors to our success and traction in the marketplace. As such, as they transform to address changing market conditions, we wanted to make it easy to add new competencies or business models as part of our engagement," said King.

King continued, "We couldn't have anticipated the enthusiasm with which our partners embraced the new program. More than 40 percent had met the requirements for at least three competencies within the first six months. We have been thrilled with the response."

Choose Your Own Engagement

The Hitachi Vantara partner program offers a simple and easy path for partners to engage with Hitachi Vantara in a way that aligns to their own business transformations, preferred business models and competencies.

Hitachi Vantara supports the following four partner business models:

- **Resell:** Partners resell Hitachi Vantara products, solutions or Hitachi-delivered services.
- **Deliver:** Partners support or deploy services, including installation and configuration, support and professional services around Hitachi Vantara products and solutions. These can be stand-alone offerings or provided in combination with the Partner's own value-add offerings.
- **Manage:** Partners manage or run various as-a-service offerings powered by Hitachi Vantara.
- **Create:** Partners design, develop and build applications, software, hardware and integrated solutions based on Hitachi Vantara technologies and offerings.



FOUR CORE COMPETENCIES

The partner then selects from among four available competencies:

- **Data Infrastructure:** Often foundational for digital transformation and data center modernization. Partners help customers lower costs, minimize risk, reduce footprint and accelerate transformation initiatives through automation, centralization and streamlining, optimization of performance through storage modernization, storage virtualization and use of converged infrastructures.
- **Data Governance and Intelligence:** Partners help customers easily and cost-effectively transform data into powerful business information. They are expert in enabling customers to ingest, manage, unify, share and mobilize data.
- **Big Data Insights and IoT:** Partners help customers analyze and visualize their data and drive better outcomes using artificial intelligence, advanced analytics and asset virtualization.
- **Cloud:** Partners help customers reduce time to deployment and improve business agility without compromising business-critical services via everything-as-a-service offerings.

King said, "When we launched our new program in April, we reiterated our commitment to increase flexibility and agility, maximize profitability, improve self-service, and demonstrate consistency. From new technical tools, sales resources, and partner resell-optimized solution configurations to greater deal registration efficiencies and enhanced incentives and promotions, we continue to deliver against these promises."

A Hitachi partner for nearly 20 years, Consiliant Technologies agrees. Joe Kadlec, vice president and senior partner at the Irvine, Calif.-based solution provider said, "It's a different company. We've seen a shift in how they work with partners. We also see growing support for the value proposition we can bring. We're very pleased with Hitachi Vantara."

Expand Opportunities and Attract New Partners

In line with its identified strategic growth and incubation areas, including data analytics and IoT, Hitachi Vantara continues to look for partners with the right expertise

and offerings to tackle the market together. It is equally committed to enabling these partners to succeed.

Hitachi Vantara and its next-generation partner engagement made it possible for partner Coda Technologies to sign its first IoT contract. Owner Scottie Kearns found an opportunity with one of the company's mining clients to deploy an IoT solution that used both existing and newly installed sensors in the client's equipment.

"It was a big investment with a lot of risk," Kearns said.

"We feared we were not yet ready for that type of implementation. So, we spoke with Hitachi. They reviewed the products, training and investments available to us to ensure the project's overall success," said Kearns.

"We will continue to selectively expand our ecosystem, adding partners and market makers in specific markets where we need coverage or vertical markets, like financial services, manufacturing and transportation, where we see tremendous opportunities," King said. "That said, we are not looking to grow our ecosystem exponentially, where the opportunities become few and far between for our partners. We want to grow the ecosystem in such a way that we expand everyone's share of a growing pie."

To attract partners, particularly in specific markets, focus areas or verticals, the company has doubled down on partner benefits from investment funds and backend rebates to greater marketing collaboration. New and enhanced incentives around areas like data analytics, for example, reward partners as they start to grow their business with Hitachi Vantara.

The company also provides eligible partners with upfront marketing dollars to allow greater flexibility in planning marketing activities for the coming year. To help partners maximize these dollars, Hitachi Vantara offers a list of marketing agencies with pre-negotiated pricing that can assist with the messaging and packaging of joint marketing campaigns.

"We recognize that the industry, our customers and partners are changing. We want to maximize the opportunity for Hitachi Vantara and our partners. Next-generation partner engagement. More flexibility and choice. Increased profitability and a growing opportunity around new areas like data analytics, IoT and the cloud. It's all there for the taking." ■