

VIEWPOINT



Jim Kent

CEO, WORKSOFT

With over twenty years leading and growing software and technology companies in the U.S. and abroad, Kent oversees corporate strategy, growth and innovation at Worksoft, an SAP® partner and leading global provider of business process validation software for packaged enterprise applications. As CEO, he works with leaders at some of the largest global fortune 1000 companies to speed up project timelines, improve quality and gain operational efficiencies.

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WORKSOFT®



Delivering Agility and Achieving Stability

Worksoft CEO Discusses Innovating Faster Without Disrupting Business

CIOs need to support the business with dependable, reliable services—yet the business also expects IT to drive innovation that helps the company respond nimbly to changing market conditions and new technologies. Jim Kent, chief executive officer at Worksoft, which helps companies validate end-to-end business processes, explains why stability and agility don't have to be mutually exclusive when it comes to enterprise apps.

What are CIOs at global companies telling you about the directives they're getting from top management?

CIOs are challenged to deliver the technology that enables top-line revenue growth. They're expected to bring on board innovation that the business needs, and stay one step ahead of accelerating technology change. At the same time, every enterprise system is expected to be solid and predictable, so that all business processes continue to work as needed. It's a tall order.

How has that changed the role of the CIO?

CIOs are changing their thinking about managing the risk of change. Technology change isn't slowing down. In fact, the CEO of Gartner recently said that information technology has changed more in the last three years than in the previous 20.

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That's because more and more business teams are driving adoption of new software specifically for their businesses. CIOs need to keep everything operating smoothly and stitch it together across the enterprise. They have to make sure each business continues to function without a blip even as they introduce more innovation to make the organization more responsive and efficient.

Managing risk and change together—that's the new reality.

What are the challenges involved in balancing the need for agility with the need for reliability?

Whether you're bringing in SAP HANA® for big data, starting mobile projects, or moving to the cloud, CIOs need to accelerate innovation without excessive risk to the business. You have to make sure you've identified the critical processes and taken steps to protect them, even as you make changes. Applications can break, business processes can fail, and the business can be disrupted if you're not prepared. Companies can't eliminate that risk, but you can manage and minimize it.

How can CIOs innovate faster to meet business demands while still ensuring rock-solid business execution?

Automating business process validation ensures that critical business processes continue working before, during, and after the introduction of new technology. If your company validates business processes manually—and 70 percent of companies do—you are at increased risk. Without automation, you have little guarantee they'll all continue working throughout change.

Global companies that use automation can significantly speed up deployments while reducing defects and lowering costs. IDC reports that with automation companies can save more than 50,000 hours annually, shorten testing cycles by 38 percent, and nearly halve the number of defects affecting customers and users. So agility and stability really can go hand in hand. ■