

# MicroScope

MARCH 2023

INDISPENSABLE CHANNEL ANALYSIS

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IBM channel boss  
relishes opportunity  
to grow ecosystem  
across channel

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What's driving  
the storage  
market in 2023?

Five-minute interview:  
Mike Sheppard, Panasas



## Steering towards change

The storage market needs to shift into gear on cloud,  
security and ESG to drive continued success

KALYAKANI/ADOBE



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# The right place and the right time

It was interesting to sit down recently with Alison Say, who was appointed as UK&I ecosystem lead at IBM last August, to hear her [talk about place and purpose](#). When asked if she was excited about the challenge of running the channel side of the business, she spoke of being in the right place at the right time. Say is clearly trusted by IBM to deliver the results it is looking for, and she seems more than capable of making a difference.

Say joins a growing list of people who have identified working with the channel as the place to make a significant difference. Partnership, solving customer problems and making sure excellence is rewarded are all tasks that require consistency and understanding. Say's enthusiasm for the task of doubling the channel in the next three to five years, as well as significantly growing new logo acquisition, is not one to be sniffed at.

However, this goes beyond the business metrics that can be measured on a spreadsheet. Say represents the positive trend in the channel to acknowledge the need to deal with [sustainability, diversity and reaching out to bring the next generation into the business](#).

The channel is a people business – and that has to mean all people. Some of the activities that Big Blue is involved with, ranging from school days to degree apprenticeships, show it is prepared to open the doors to talent.

That is why this is the right place and the right time for so many of those working across the channel. It is still a transactional world, but one that appreciates so much more of the human dimension. It is also a moment when those delivering technology and services are more important than ever to their customers. The excitement shown by Say is something that we can all share as we acknowledge the power of the channel to deliver positive change. ■

*Simon Quicke, editor*

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# IBM channel boss relishes opportunity to grow ecosystem across channel

*IBM's UK and Ireland channel lead is excited by the prospect of making a difference in the role and helping the vendor increase its partner business. [Simon Quicke reports](#)*

IBM is looking for significant channel growth, both in terms of partner numbers and the business generated by those that work with the vendor.

Targets of doubling the channel base in three years and tripling new logos in a similar timeframe do not seem to faze IBM's recently installed vice-president of ecosystem UK and Ireland, Alison Say.

Say stepped into the role in August 2022, moving from elsewhere within Big Blue. Her time at IBM spans 13 years in different roles, a lot of which have been partner facing, including running the ecosystem on the storage side of the business.

Say said there are certain points in your career where you think "that's my job", and this was one of them. "Ecosystem is kind of in my DNA...I've understood the value of the ecosystem from the get-go," she said. "This is perfect for me. The jobs I've done before rounded out how I understand the company, so I was really excited to have the opportunity to do this job."

Say joined the ecosystem at a time when several big things were planned on the channel side of the business, with a fresh

partner programme, [Partner Plus, launching in January 2023](#), and a sense that the ecosystem is seen across the company as a vital element of IBM's growth strategy.

"When I was interviewing for the job, I was told that lots of things were changing, but I didn't necessarily see what they were, so [it was] a leap of faith. Because if I was going to come into this role, I wanted things to change. I wanted certain things that I've experienced in the past to be different. I'm really glad I took that leap of faith because we're not just talking about it. This is fundamentally different, what we're doing," she said.

"This is a step-change; it's not tinkering around the edges. This is the most significant change, both [in terms of programme] and how we're going to market, in 10-plus years," Say added.

Partner Plus launched on 4 January, putting a revised programme, with greater levels of rewards and support, in place in a clear demonstration of how IBM is getting behind its channel.

"The announcement gave us something really tangible to talk about. What's really interesting about it is we're not changing any major strategy around go to market, we're not changing our

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product approach and we're not changing all the priorities that we've set out as a company. There's a lot of stability, but on top of that we've put in place this engine and acceleration on the partner piece," said Say.

The partner programme is a key plank of the efforts IBM is making, but it goes beyond the nuts and bolts of rebate, enablement and incentive programmes – it is something more fundamental.

"There's a lot of positive momentum right now. What's changing? It's hard to quantify a feeling, but the conversation's changed. When you hear all of our announcements, it's [client and partner](#) in the same sentence – it's not ecosystem as an afterthought," said Say.

"We've always been a strong ecosystem company and it's always played a really important role, particularly in our infrastructure business and our software business. But the momentum and impetus and focus on ecosystem in every conversation from the top down is really noticeable," she added. "The ecosystem is a growth engine for us. Our aspirations for the company are heavily pinned on the importance and growth in the ecosystem. From an ecosystem-specific perspective, our ambition is to double the business over the next three to five years."

### AMBITIOUS TARGETS

The opportunities for partners have also changed as IBM sets out to dominate the hybrid cloud and artificial intelligence (AI) segments. Big Blue has been active, [buying the likes of Red Hat](#) to bolster its own proposition and, as a result, one the channel can put in front of customers.

A lot of IBM's channel has modernised along with the vendor, but the fundamentals – storage and power – that got a lot of them into a relationship with the vendor decades ago are still there.

Having a wider product portfolio and being in a position to solve more customer problems means there is an expectation that partners will bring on board more fresh logos. Along with the channel growth targets, that is another goal Say is working towards.

**“WE HAVE A HUGE AMBITION  
IN 2023...AROUND NEW  
CLIENT ACQUISITION”**  
ALISON SAY, IBM

"We have a huge ambition in 2023, and we put a stake in the ground around new client acquisition. We're looking to triple year on year the number of new clients we acquire, and we can't do that without the ecosystem," she said.

For someone facing sizeable growth targets and helping to bed in a fresh partner programme, Say comes across as excited, motivated and confident the channel will deliver.

"This is where my passion and purpose come together," she said. "The changes are so fundamental, not only in the programmes, but in the momentum and attitude. It's a good place to be, although it doesn't mean that we aren't going to have to continue to innovate and continue to grow." ■

Catch up with the latest channel news online.

# How to make your business more sustainable

*Flex IT's UK sales manager, [Ashley Ross](#), sets out six simple steps to help make a difference in green efforts*

**N**ot only is sustainability rising up the priority list of boards and C-suites, it's also rapidly becoming an essential factor for businesses and consumers alike.

Ultimately, how green an organisation is perceived to be can have a significant impact on customers' decisions to purchase from them.

As such, IT leaders are under a lot of pressure to improve their IT procurement strategy with a sprinkling of sustainability if they are to appease people, planet and profit.

To help in this endeavour, there are several simple steps businesses can take to quickly and easily become more sustainable.

## **GET SERIOUS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY: SET NET-ZERO GOALS**

To know where you want your green journey to go, you need to outline a clear roadmap for how you plan to get there. Being a business led by sustainability will not only benefit the environment, it will make you more appealing to like-minded customers and will solidify your reputation as a conscientious provider that people will want to do business with.

By challenging yourself to think differently, you'll cultivate a [culture of innovation](#) that will spark new ideas, new processes and new ways of converting customers.

To set a [net-zero goal](#), you must have a clear understanding of your current shortcomings (i.e. emissions, waste, providers) and then set an agreed plan for how you will change these and by when. To ensure success, you need organisation-wide buy-in – after all, it takes a village.

## **EARN YOUR STRIPES: WORK TO ACHIEVE ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATIONS**

B Corp, ISO 14001, GBC and One Planet Living are all UK-recognised certifications that prove you are walking the walk and talking the talk when it comes to [building a sustainable business model](#).

Working towards any of the above certifications will give you a strong framework that will help you decrease emissions, limit waste and champion sustainability at every level. Find out which certification is relevant to your business, earn it, and use it to let partners, customers and everyone else know that you're a reliable and green business that's doing its bit for the planet.

## **TRUST IN TECH: SWAP TO ENERGY-SAVING SOLUTIONS**

While eco-driven technologies typically require an upfront investment, they will quickly save energy and money once they're up

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and running. High costs may initially put off cash-strapped businesses, but it's worth investigating how quickly you will break even and how quickly you will start saving money before making a decision.

But [sustainable technology](#) doesn't have to be new and expensive. By engaging in the circular economy, whereby organisations opt for used hardware – which is pre-loved but otherwise as good as new – you'll save tonnes of plastic reaching landfills and stop unnecessary emissions that come from repairing, remanufacturing and refurbishing IT kit.

### **BECOME LEAN AND GREEN: REDUCE UNNECESSARY WASTE**

Regardless of their operations, every business produces waste. While generating waste may be inevitable, what a business does with that waste can have a huge effect on reaching their sustainability efforts.

Whether it's [cutting down on paper](#), opting for a recycled alternative or adjusting processes to [become paperless by default](#), there are plenty of immediate steps businesses can take to becoming greener.

Paper is one example, but technology is another often-overlooked waste generator. By adopting a circular approach to IT, you can save money and find a new use for hardware that would otherwise find itself in a scrap pile.

Buying secondhand equipment or selling your own pre-loved kit is not only great for the planet, but it's also a new route to cost savings as you can purchase good-as-new tech at a fraction of the RRP.

### **PRIORITISE PLANET-FRIENDLY PURCHASING: REVIEW YOUR SUPPLIERS AND THEIR PRODUCTS**

This requires time and focus as you look at the multitude of providers and services you buy from and assess if they're the best partner to help you in your journey to net zero. It can be a long process, but the benefits are worth the ordeal as customers will undoubtedly take note of your emphasis on your partners' values as well as your own and will be far more likely to give you their business as a result.

Changing everything all at once can be a time-consuming and costly process, so start by recognising the quick changes you can make today before focusing on bigger changes that will take time and investment to alter. It's a marathon, not a sprint, and every effort, no matter how small, will put you one step closer to your net-zero targets.

### **EMBRACE THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY TO HIT THE GROUND RUNNING**

While these steps will supercharge your sustainability journey, one quick fix that ticks all of the above is the adoption of [circular IT](#).

By choosing to procure reused IT equipment, you will immediately start reducing waste and reducing energy consumption, all while reducing your own spending and making you far more attractive to conscientious customers.

In doing so, you will be working with sustainable suppliers and be better equipped to achieve your green certifications and reach your net-zero goals in record time. ■

# WHAT'S DRIVING THE STORAGE MARKET?

*A number of factors are affecting the storage industry, and the channel can benefit from understanding the dynamics of the market. Billy MacInnes reports*



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**D**uring the early months of any year, optimists and pessimists alike can't help wondering what the coming months might have in store for them, their work and the world around them. Why should the storage market be any different?

When *MicroScope* asked people in the storage industry what the biggest drivers in the market are likely to be in 2023, it quickly became clear that three areas stand out for nearly all of them: [the cloud](#), [security](#), and [environmental, social and corporate governance](#) factors.

## AMONG THE CLOUDS

[Dell Technologies](#)' vice-president of UK channel, Rob Tomlin, predicts an industry shift to true multicloud architectures. "These use the compute services of whatever clouds you embrace, but also focus on turning critical capabilities 'horizontal' across the multicloud environment," he says.

There's been a strong focus on mid-range storage and storage as a service through Dell's Apex offerings, he adds. "[The consumption model] has become significantly popular among our customers as it offers them the best of both worlds – the public cloud flexibility and agility they want and the private cloud protection they need," says Tomlin. "Many customers have held off deciding between having a full public cloud or a multicloud approach, but they can no longer afford to delay."

According to Tomlin, data growth and multicloud present "many significant opportunities" for partners to deliver outcome-based solutions to customers. "Those opportunities exist across the



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entire data lifecycle, from delivering discovery services around modernising and protecting the customer's environment, to managing, delivering and simplifying what can be a complex multi-cloud world," he says. "[Partners that provide] an end-to-end offering to help customers with the transition to multicloud are the ones that are coming out on top. No matter the partner's size, this is where customers see value."

David Friend, CEO and co-founder at [Wasabi](#), is equally positive about the cloud, saying: "The bottom line for the channel is that cloud data storage has a nearly infinite market potential, and the drivers influencing companies to move their data to the cloud will only get stronger over time as the savings become more obvious."

The cloud is becoming more diverse from a vendor perspective, he adds. "The channel has a major opportunity to put all the pieces together for customers. For example, if a company needs a backup solution for its new servers, the channel partner might sell a bundle composed of two parts: a solution from one vendor handling scheduling and recording backups, and another solution that handles the storage," says Friend.

Channel partners that have been selling hardware storage solutions for the past 40 years are turning to [cloud storage](#) instead, he notes, adding that there are customers that "don't want to own and operate their own storage hardware".

**“THE DRIVERS INFLUENCING COMPANIES TO MOVE THEIR DATA TO THE CLOUD WILL ONLY GET STRONGER OVER TIME AS THE SAVINGS BECOME MORE OBVIOUS”**

**DAVID FRIEND, WASABI**

"Often, the applications that customers are running are easier to implement in the cloud, especially those that support a work-from-home user base. Customers lean on their channel partners for advice on how to save money," he says.

Partners could use their existing trusted adviser relationships with customers to help them migrate infrastructure such as storage to the cloud, saving money for the customer and making money for themselves in the process, adds Friend.

Matt Child, UK and Ireland managing director of advanced solutions at [TD Synnex](#), highlights hybrid converged infrastructure (HCI) and everything as a service (EaaS) as two trends to watch.

"HCI is now accepted as the way forward for enterprise infrastructures, and that's going to see organisations

having data sitting inside multiple clouds and on-premises. At the same time, all the major hyperscale vendors are moving towards EaaS and these related trends will see a huge opportunity for partners to provide management, orchestration, monitoring and protection of data," he says.

Melissa Lyons, senior director of channels, Americas, at [Scality](#), predicts tighter integration between managed cloud services and object storage. "Customers value cloud-like storage services but show a preference for them from the comfort of their





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Data security is becoming increasingly important and that is reflected in the priorities of the data storage industry

own datacentre infrastructure,” she says. “As such, we will see increasing partnerships between object storage vendors and large OEMs or managed service providers [MSPs] to provide fully integrated, private cloud [S3 storage-as-a-service](#) offerings.”

She warns that while the cloud delivers on its “cheaper and better” promise early on, margins take a hit as organisations scale and growth slows – often referred to as “the cloud paradox”. To mitigate this, more users are repatriating some cloud-based workloads back on-premise, Lyons claims.

“Channel partners are in an ideal position to help them rotate to a hybrid strategy that can optimise their infrastructure and reduce costs. This trend will accelerate in 2023,” she says.

Andy Palmer, co-founder and CEO of [Tamr](#), points out that the move to the cloud has turned data storage into a commodity. “That’s not a bad thing,” he says. “While data storage remains important, it is no longer the focus of the conversation. Companies today assume data storage is inexpensive, highly available and performant – and that availability and performance will continue to improve at a rapid pace while costs continue to decrease.”

## SECURITY A KEY DRIVER

One issue that is becoming increasingly important for many organisations is data security, and that is being reflected in the priorities of the data storage industry.

Dell’s Tomlin describes cyber security and the protection of data as a key driver: “Companies increasingly recognise the importance of protecting against ransomware attacks and having a robust enough backup solution to get back up and running with their most critical data safe.”

Customers are keen to prioritise cyber security. “Securing your data nowadays is as important as managing it,” he says. “With the explosion of data, there is an explosion of potential risks. Companies must store and secure correctly in the face of increasingly complex workloads and the constant threat of cyber attacks. We see data protection and cyber resilience constantly growing.”

Florian Malecki, executive vice-president of marketing at [Arcserve](#), highlights cyber recovery as a service (CRaaS) as a significant driver of growth in 2023. “CRaaS is a service whose time has come,” he says, “especially as [ransomware attacks](#)

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continue unabated, forcing victims to pay a high price to recover their data. IDC believes CRaaS can yield high-growth opportunities with solid margins for MSPs that can take advantage of it.”

Backing up data is one thing, but the real test is whether a company can recover data promptly after a cyber attack or other disruption. “Too many MSPs and their customers believe disaster preparedness begins and ends with backing up data, and forget that backup alone is not enough,” he warns. “In 2023, I think MSPs will direct more efforts toward helping customers quickly recover their data in an emergency. The first step in these efforts will be advising customers to develop a solid recovery plan.”

Paul Speciale, chief marketing officer at Scalify, says data security considerations have always been top of mind for customers. “But in 2023, IT leaders will evaluate every solution, including data storage, by its ability to protect data from the multiplicity of threat vectors,” he says.

Speciale believes security “will dominate IT-buying criteria”, including for data storage, and although supply chain issues and economic challenges will continue to affect storage projects in 2023, there will be an exception for those that can show tangible return on investment (ROI) on ransomware protection initiatives.

“This will present an opportunity for big data storage solutions with the intelligence to address current gaps in multilevel security,

detection and data immutability for ransomware protection and fast business recoverability,” says Speciale.

Eric Herzog, chief marketing officer at [Infinidat](#), expects “a burst of realisation” across the channel in 2023 that storage needs to be integrated into a cyber security strategy. “This ‘moment of truth’ that is expected in 2023 has been building up over the past couple of years,” he says. “Incorporating storage into the

customer’s overall cyber security strategy will enable channel partners to deliver more comprehensive solutions, uniting security and cyber storage into a single solution.

“By doing so, channel partners are covering all bases. It allows them to increase the revenue opportunities and profit,” says Herzog. “Security allows partners to combine different components. Cyber storage is critical as a key component to an overall, corporate cyber security approach.”

Darren Gross, [Tintri](#) director of EMEA channels, agrees that data protection, including ransomware mitigation and recovery, will be an important area for growth. “Ransomware attacks have become a significant global threat to nearly every organisation,” he says. “Organisations need to plan for this cyber protection failure and implement a plan for recovering from such an attack. The right plan and technology stack will play a vital role in the successful recovery and resuming of normal operations.”

**“CRAAS IS A SERVICE WHOSE  
TIME HAS COME, ESPECIALLY AS  
RANSOMWARE ATTACKS CONTINUE  
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**FLORIAN MALECKI, ARCSERVE**

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Corporate vice-president of marketing at Spectra Logic, Betsy Doughty, says vendors that deliver solutions to help users become more ransomware resilient will continue to be sought after as trusted advisers. “Channel partners are taking major steps forward as trusted advisers as they become more familiar with issues relevant to users, such as tackling ransomware and offering ways to mitigate attacks. We’ve seen success when the channel leads with stories of ransomware survival,” she says. “Customers genuinely seem interested in attending events with this as a primary topic and a promise to discuss strategies to help them prepare and prevent attacks.”

Offering a slightly different perspective, [Quantum](#) senior director of channel sales Guillaume Crapart claims the threat posed by ransomware has prompted customers to “rediscover” their enthusiasm for tape. “Sales have skyrocketed in recent years as companies have come to the realisation that one of the best ways to defend against ransomware is to keep sensitive files and documents from being online in the first place,” he says.

Renewed enthusiasm for tape presents a great opportunity for channel partners, argues Crapart. “The technology is easy to understand and therefore easy to sell. For customers, it is highly effective in providing a crucial backup method in the event of a security breach,” he adds.

## PRIORITISING ESG

This “reuse” or repurposing of “old technology” provides the segue into another potential area of growth in 2023 – environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG).

Geoff Greenlaw, [Pure Storage](#) vice-president for EMEA and Latin America channel sales, claims that ESG is now a top three issue for customers. “Datacentre power consumption will continue to be a major challenge in 2023. The focus will be primarily on costs, given the current economic situation and the fact that IT budgets are growing in single digits. However, pressure from climate change is also driving unprecedented upheaval,” he says.

Channel partners should educate themselves on sustainability to help customers make informed decisions. “[Partners are] ideally placed to advise on power savings and consumption, cooling, space savings – anything that can drive datacentre costs down,” says Greenlaw.

If they don’t adopt this approach, they could be left behind in an increasingly competitive, changing and tightening market.

Greenlaw says channel partners will need “to communicate with customers in a different language that goes beyond tech and encompasses financial and ESG literacy”.

Environmental, social, and corporate governance is a high priority for the channel and customers. “Many partners are creating mini boards or steering committees to address the issue, and sustainability is now a top three criteria in all RFPs [requests for proposal] we receive. Customers are demanding that ESG be addressed and partners need to be able to respond accordingly,” he adds.

This trend will accelerate in 2023, Greenlaw believes, regardless of any economic downturn. “A key reason for this is that if a storage vendor can demonstrate an 80% reduction in power

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and cooling costs, this will become very compelling to customers in terms of ESG commitments and the desire to reduce costs," he says.


Scality's Lyons points to a convergence of increased awareness on [climate change](#) and an extended economic downturn, which will prompt enterprises "to refocus their IT budgets on solutions that can deliver savings and ROI in operational costs through reduced power consumption, opening up new opportunities for channel companies as they partner with their customers in these efforts".

She notes the storage industry has already focused attention on this area through the Storage Networking Industry Association (SNIA) Green Storage Initiative, which aims to focus on standards for lower power consumption from large-scale data storage systems.

"Vendor and service provider offerings will emerge with innovations that reduce power consumption through smart resource utilisation and use of the latest low-power and high storage density platforms," she adds. "This will provide measurable savings in power consumption and cooling to reduce environmental impact from storage."

Infinidat's Herzog believes the consolidation of storage arrays could be the start for ESG. He describes storage consolidation as a "quick win" for IT leaders seeking to demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and a contribution to an organisation's green efforts to reduce its carbon footprint.

It's unlikely to end there. "Momentum is building for green IT to sweep the market in 2023 and beyond," adds Herzog. ■



Environmental, social, and corporate governance is a high priority for the channel and its customers



FIVE-MINUTE INTERVIEW

# MIKE SHEPPARD, PANASAS

*MicroScope puts its questions to Mike Sheppard, director of channels and alliances at Panasas*



## HI MIKE, TELL US WHAT YOU DO FOR A LIVING

I'm Mike Sheppard, director of channels and alliances at [Panasas](#). I recruit and onboard partners in the high-performance storage space, and I fortify relationships with our existing resellers, distributors, and alliance partners.

## WHY ARE YOU THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THIS JOB?

I have a wide range of experience in this realm. I spent about four years at [Intel](#) in a similar role with a different context. After Intel acquired Whamcloud in 2012, we built out an ecosystem of partners to sell the software-defined Lustre product and integrate it with their respective hardware solutions. At Panasas, the situation is different: we have a tried-and-true appliance already built here, so we are really selling a product as opposed to a project. I've only been with Panasas for about four months, but I expect that this is going to be a slightly easier path to market.

## WHAT GETS YOU UP IN THE MORNING?

It's the fun factor! I enjoy working with our partners and seeing them succeed. I enjoy helping them support their customers. And this means positioning them in such a way that they can go out and win more business by offering a solution that is not only easy to sell, but also easy for customers to manage once the deal is done.

## WHO HELPED YOU GET TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

That would probably be Bret Costelow (executive of global sales at Panasas), who I've known and worked with on and off for the better part

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of 30 years. Bret was the one who reached out to me when there was a role open at Intel, and now we work together again at Panasas.

There are also many people on the technical side who have been essential throughout my career. I've always leaned on solution architects and technical engineers to really understand what I'm selling.

### IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET THROUGH AN INDUSTRY CONVERSATION WITHOUT MENTIONING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION?

Digital transformation is definitely the buzzword today. But, ultimately, that really is what everybody is trying to do, especially since the pandemic. I don't necessarily think you need to always label it as "digital transformation"; it's more of an evolutionary process of leveraging technology to improve whatever operations you have in place.

### WHAT IS THE BEST OR WORST BUSINESS ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND FROM WHOM?

Before I joined Intel, I worked in the copier industry. My sales leader at the time told me that I was making the worst decision of my sales career, and of course it actually turned out to be the best.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE STARTING OUT TODAY IN IT?

Coming from a sales perspective, the most important thing that a lot of people fail to do – and this isn't necessarily limited to IT – is just listen. You need to become an expert at listening to your customers, understanding the environment, and reading the room.

The more information that you can gather, the better you can position the solution you are selling. So many people today, especially in IT, are so focused on presenting the speeds and

feeds and datasheets that they don't really take the time to listen to the problems the customer is trying to solve.

### WHAT DO THE NEXT FIVE YEARS HOLD FOR THE CHANNEL?

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are the hot technologies right now, and they will be very exciting areas for the chan-

nel over the next five years.

As organisations integrate AI/ML into their environments, they'll need to make smart infrastructure decisions to support those emerging workflows. For example, they'll have to [avoid the costly mistakes of overbuilding or bottlenecking](#) in any single part of the broader system. The channel is perfectly positioned to be the trusted adviser on those matters.

**“COMING FROM A SALES  
 PERSPECTIVE, THE MOST IMPORTANT  
 THING THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE  
 FAIL TO DO IS JUST LISTEN”**

**MIKE SHEPPARD, PANASAS**

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## HAVE YOU LEARNT ANYTHING NEW – GUITAR, PAINTING, ETC – DURING THE PANDEMIC?

Can I say video conferencing? Like most people, I've had to learn how to interact over a computer as opposed to face to face.

## TELL US SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU

I'm an avid golfer and a huge sports fan. I watch college football, baseball, and pretty much every other sport. I played sports growing up and it remains a big part of my life – that's probably where I get my competitiveness.

## WHAT GOAL DO YOU HAVE TO ACHIEVE BEFORE YOU DIE, AND WHY?

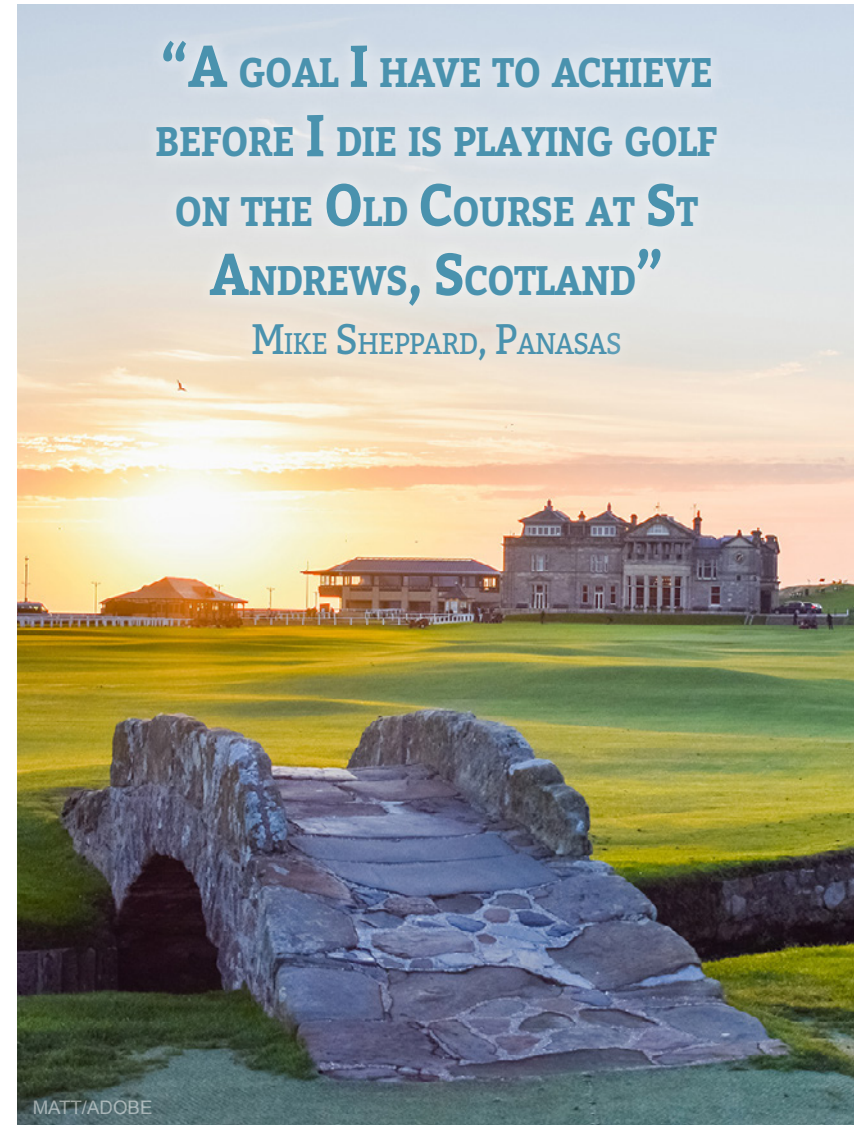
The Masters golf tournament in Georgia, playing golf in Scotland (the Old Course at St Andrews), and a NASCAR event are on my bucket list. But on a more personal and deeper level, I would have to say seeing my kids be happy and successful.

## WHAT IS THE BEST BOOK YOU'VE EVER READ?

Probably *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. It's about the 1936 University of Washington rowing team who won the Olympics in Berlin. It's an inspiring book that follows a group of working-class boys who bond together and accomplish the incredible feat of winning an Olympic gold medal. It tugs at the heartstrings, and I'm not just saying this because it's a story about my alma mater.

**“A GOAL I HAVE TO ACHIEVE  
BEFORE I DIE IS PLAYING GOLF  
ON THE OLD COURSE AT ST  
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**AND THE WORST FILM YOU'VE EVER SEEN?**

Gosh, worst film. Most likely one that my wife made me watch and I have since forgotten!

**WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DESERT ISLAND MP3s?**

I would go for three albums: Pearl Jam *Ten*, Dave Matthews Band *Live at the Gorge*, and U2 *The best of U2*.

**WHAT TEMPTATION CAN YOU NOT RESIST?**

A good IPA or a Kentucky bourbon.

**WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CAR AND HOW DOES IT COMPARE WITH WHAT YOU DRIVE NOW?**

My first car was a 1982 Chevy Cavalier. The car that I drive now is much, much nicer.

**WHO WOULD YOU LEAST LIKE TO BE STUCK IN A LIFT WITH? WHY, WHAT DID THEY DO?**

This is going to sound really crass, but that would be Barbara Hedges, who was our athletic director

at the University of Washington and put us on probation back in 1992.

**IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL FOR A DAY, WHAT WOULD YOU BE AND WHY?**

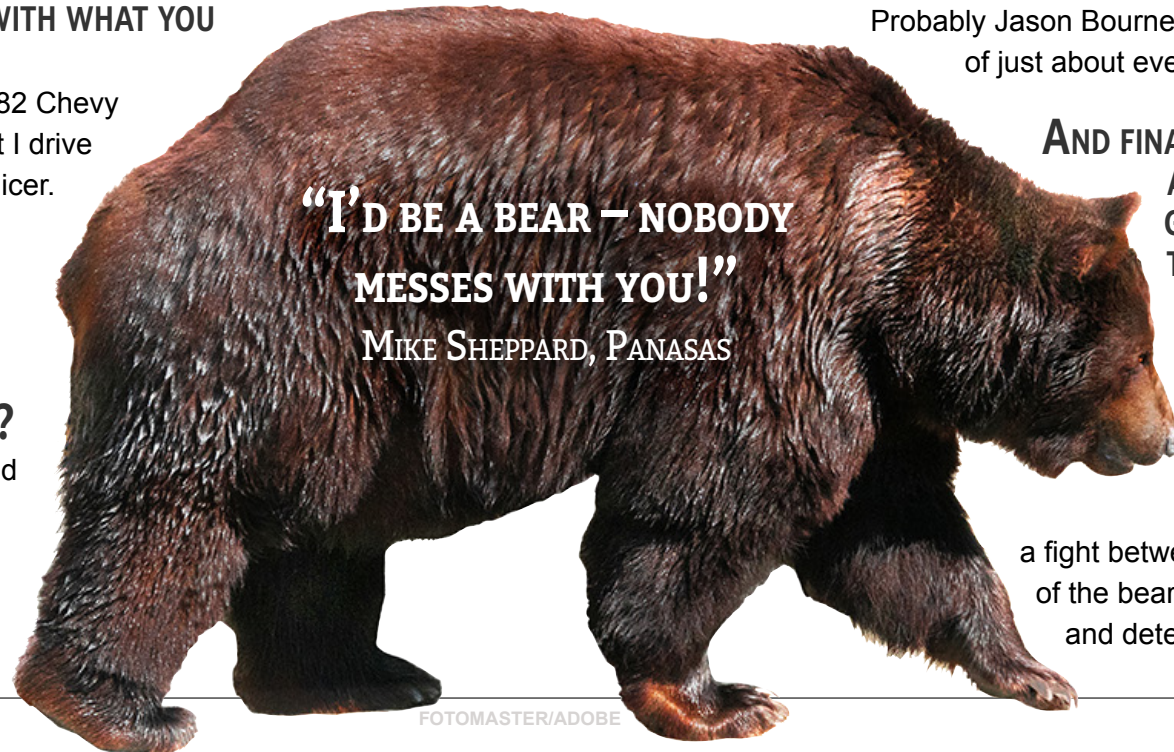
That's an interesting one. Maybe a bear, because I could work hard at foraging and feeding myself and then take around three months off to sleep – and nobody messes with you!

**IF YOU WERE FACING AWESOME PERIL AND IMPOSSIBLE ODDS, WHICH REAL OR FICTIONAL PERSON YOU MOST WANT ON YOUR SIDE AND WHY?**

Probably Jason Bourne – that guy can get out of just about every situation imaginable.

**AND FINALLY, A GRIZZLY BEAR AND A SILVERBACK GORILLA ARE GETTING READY FOR A NO-HOLDS-BARRED RUMBLE. WHO IS YOUR MONEY ON AND WHY?**

I'd probably say the grizzly bear would win a fight between those two because of the bear's sheer strength, size, and determination. ■



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