



Interview: Mike Reynolds Head of Engineering



Mike Reynolds Savient's head of Engineering talks about how the approach to development and product creation is different, how it empowers his team and delivered the company's Savitrace product.

Can you start by telling us a bit about yourself and your experiences?

I have spent most of the last 25 years working in the technology sector with a focus on solving customer problems. I have always enjoyed spending time with people to understand their challenges and frustrations and then working on how I can make things better for them.

Data enrichment has been at the heart of most of my work, from a project to improve the quality of mapping data for Western Australia, through fighter flight path analysis to providing real time visualisation of underground assets (such as pipes) for utility customers. If there is a data component that can add value by being integrated or enriched, it's the sort of project I will enjoy.

I have always enjoyed being hands on and moved from Electronic Engineering to IT early in my education focusing on ensuring process improvement was at the heart of any technical transformation project.

What is your role within Savient?

As Head of Engineering I lead the team with a focus on producing a range of CoTS (customer off the shelf) products. My team are responsible for the end to end process from requirements definition through to QA and release.

I act as the hub ensuring all our team members are aware of what we are doing and how it could be applied to their work.

What makes Engineering in Savient different?

Innovation and creative space is at the heart of our organisation. We make time for all our team to explore new or interesting technologies without specific business requirements, freeing them to be as 'wild' as they like. My role is then about capturing the learning and exploring how we move from concept to proof of concept to core product. It's the first time in my career that I have been able to allocate time and space



to my team for trying new ways of working. We have a great team and they have embraced this way of working.

What is most rewarding about your role?

The way in which we combine innovation, programme learning and customer requirements is very rewarding. From our 'Tech Tuesdays' where the team share their experiences, through to sharing new process and tooling with our consultancy team its really rewarding to see how our people grow and develop when given freedom to do so.

What is most challenging about your role?

Blending flexibility and creativity with customer requirements and product deadlines is challenging. Ensuring we don't stifle our team through the application of timescales and governance. I have to ensure that we get the right blend between 'bleeding edge' innovation and stability and repeatability of codebase.

How does it feel to see Savient's first COTS (Customer out of the box) solution launched?

As a team we're 'pumped'! It's so rewarding after so much effort to have our solution in front of customers and prospects and getting positive feedback. This is really the start of the journey not the end and I'm looking forward to working on the evolution of our products as we work closely with our customers. Savitrace will remove so many of the frustrations investigators have described to us during the design and prototyping phase.

And finally, outside of work what do you do to relax?

Relaxation has evolved over my career and whereas I used to enjoy Snowboarding holidays and DIY, now it's more about family time. Coding has remained a passion and I often will take time to play with emerging tools and technologies and enjoy the creativity that gives me. I like playing computer games with my son (and currently still win a few), watching the various sports he plays and spending time with family and friends. It's nice to relax at the end of the week chatting about everything and nothing with friends over a pint.