

# CIO Review

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The Navigator for Enterprise Solutions

20 MOST PROMISING  
**CIO IBM**  
Review SOLUTION PROVIDERS - 2021

## AgVantage The AgTech Experts



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*The annual listing of 20 companies that are at the forefront of providing IBM solutions and transforming businesses*

**I**n the age where digital transformation has become the buzz de jour, it is necessary to automate and digitize the essential processes such as contracts, invoices, or monthly statements for the ag-businesses. Since 1976, Minnesota-based AgVantage Software has been providing accounting and agriculture-focused software for cooperatives and ag-businesses in the US to keep their operations running leading edge technologies. Grain elevators, farm stores, fertilizer/chemical dealers, seed companies, feed manufacturers, and fuel distributors utilize its ERP system and software related to accounting, agronomy, energy management, feed, and patronage tracking. “We write cutting edge, ag-focused technologies on the foundation of the IBM power systems,” states Michelle Blomberg, president and CEO of AgVantage.



Michelle Blomberg

AgVantage has deployed Db2 as their core database, and its system runs on IBM legacy code. The firm has implemented a process called customer-driven development wherein AgVantage develops new software based on customers’ requests and feedbacks. “We rely on our customers to become the foundation of our research and development,” says Blomberg. Every week, the company conducts a meeting and evaluates the ideas or requests sent by clients. The firm ensures to track all calls and cover all the customers’ inputs. Afterward, AgVantage engages in the process of in-house designing, development, and testing. The in-house capability enables it to process an idea on paper rapidly and build software out of it in minimal timeframes.

Moreover, deployment and training documentation are conducted internally. “We have an agile workflow and our skillful employees collaborate productively in a fast-paced environment,” adds Blomberg. Apart from its IBM hosted system, the firm has a disaster recovery system, and both these

systems work in synchronization in case of a tragic event. The company has utilized several IBM applications to develop a new user interface, and customers can access data through a lot of different IBM products. AgVantage also developed an app to give farmers 24x7 access to their data such as monthly statements, pay their bills, field information, and grain balances via mobile devices. The AgVantage team puts their customer’s needs as their full mission and delivers an altogether different level of customer service. Unlike its competitors, the firm never opted for an automated call response, and every call goes through a dispatcher who collects the information and forwards it to the support team. It is essential in the industry because customers are trying to connect from rural areas and need to hear a human voice. AgVantage is committed to ensuring that every call is answered

by dedicated staff on the other end. “We are on top of the game of helping customers with problems and it is a significant part of our business,” asserts Blomberg.

AgVantage has formed close relationships with its customers. Every year in June, the firm conducts a conference to engage with clients either through live stream or in-person. It entices the bonding between the customers and its employees. The company has a solid customer base in the Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota and the Pacific Northwest, including Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. AgVantage releases new software every single week and constantly fulfills the needs of the pipeline of enhancement requests coming in from its customers. “Besides an ERP solution, we have software applications for every agriculture diversity, all working together as one. It’s one phone call for all your needs. This sets us apart from all others.” concludes Blomberg. 