

Wendy Pfeiffer

We need to enable our knowledge workers to manage and change and configure their own work.

Jason Lopez

For many organizations that's a scary statement. Personalization is expensive, standardization is considered efficient. But Wendy Pfeiffer, CIO of Nutanix, has been a dedicated student of a changing – or perhaps you might call it a disrupted – workplace. Disrupted in a good way. What we're seeing is a flipping of the paradigm. By 2026, for the majority of tech workers, standardization will be inefficient and personalization, efficient.

Wendy Pfeiffer

I can't possibly get in the mind of all 7,000 of my workers, and particularly, I can't get in the minds and, and the constructs of all of the different generations and geography locations and world cultures who are showing up in my workspace. So instead, I need to provide them with access to configure the tools and the environments and the data that they need to do their jobs in ways that are efficient for them.

Jason Lopez

Wendy calls it self-service. Automation allows anyone on their team, regardless of the level of their tech skills to provide input to machine learning.

Wendy Pfeiffer

We are using a tool called Workado, which is one of these low code no code tools. So I can tell Workado in the language that I use, that I'm most comfortable with, I can tell it visually by building a, a visual workflow, or I can tell it by writing English language words, or I can tell it by choosing phrases in its environment. I can tell RI Rico what I want to do, and RI Rico will turn that into machine instructions. Then my machine learning tools can learn from and create an automated process. We've been using Workado in it for about three years now. A network engineer might not be a software developer. They might not write code. A help desk person may not be a software developer. They might not write code, but they might be executing very complex technical or operational workflows that could be handled by automation. If only there were some connection between what that person knows and how the machine understands it.

Jason Lopez

Nutanix IT has now deployed Workado to its developer productivity team, to the HR operations team, and to the sales operations team.

Wendy Pfeiffer

We're giving the operators the ability to connect how they work to machine readable language in such a way that they can add automation to their workflows.

Jason Lopez

So for example, to approve a vacation for an employee in Workado, you don't have to go into app. You can get notified in Slack, something like, so-and-so applied for vacation time, do you approve? Click a button and it's done.

Wendy Pfeiffer

That was built by someone in HR who was tired of not getting vacation approved, and people ask her the question, How do I do this again? Et cetera. We've got 3000 software developers in the company.

They need infrastructure built for them all the time. Hey, I need a special kind of virtual machine built that does thing X, Y, and Z. They used to have to fill out a trouble ticket for that. Now they just tell Slack what they need and then the automation builds that VM for them. We've gone from having five to 10 day wait times to have virtual machines built, to having virtual machines built instantaneously once the specification is provided a huge in improvement in productivity.

Jason Lopez

Nutanix IT is doubling down on low code, no code tooling, making it available to everyone throughout the company. The more it augments the machine process, the more efficient and effective that process will be when it comes to interacting with people. So, any part of any job that is done virtually is being done via machine. Another thing IT is doing: software defined builds which are unique to Nutanix.

Wendy Pfeiffer

Nutanix makes an operating system which then interacts with everything that runs on that operating system. You know, there's 10,000 workloads that our customers and prospects run on Nutanix. Everything that happens on top of our operating system is a software defined thing.

Jason Lopez

Wendy draws an analogy with the public cloud. If you're a developer, you interact with that massive infrastructure of the public cloud via code. You do it virtually. That's a similar process to how Nutanix people interact with the company's physical infrastructure, virtually in order to do their work. She points out that their 7,000 employees have always interacted with the infrastructure virtually.

Wendy Pfeiffer

Now they're doing that not from these curated hub environments, our offices that we instrumented to be perfect for that, but they're doing that from these endpoints, from these computers. The more that we can make that interaction process scripted, the more secure it is, the more performant it is, et cetera. Just because I'm sitting at home doesn't mean that I should be expected to know, you know, what sector in the Phoenix data center is my server that I'm building on? Where is that located and how can I tell if I'm having an issue? Like they should be able to do all of that via software remotely, just like they do with public cloud part one. But then part two, they shouldn't have to know those details. Those things should be invisible to them. As a developer, I shouldn't care if my job is running on a cluster that's based on Dell or HPE or sitting in AWS. It shouldn't matter.

Jason Lopez

The work of Nutanix overall is becoming software defined, and so self-service naturally follows. Think about industries that have become software defined. 1996 was a big year for airline travel... not necessarily in terms of number of travelers but because that was the year the first two major online tickets systems launched: Travelocity and Expedia. Even though for decades the airline industry had been building its computerized ticketing platforms, those were internal systems. A traveler still had to go buy a ticket and reserve a seat at a physical location or over the phone and have the tickets sent by snail mail. Digital ticketing has made the process for travelers software defined.

Wendy Pfeiffer

That's like a massive change. Actually in the interaction design. It's that transformation that we're undergoing in our companies.

Jason Lopez

Wendy Pfeiffer is the CIO of Nutanix. There are more brief podcasts in this series on Wendy leading her team into the hybrid work process. Look us up for more in this series at theforecastbynutanix.com. This is the Tech Barometer podcast, produced by The Forecast.