



Technology and Innovation

Channel Trends – Don't Miss the New Opportunities

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Biography

Eric Herzog is the Chief Marketing Officer at Infinidat (<https://www.infinidat.com>). Prior to joining Infinidat, Herzog was Chief Marketing Office and Vice President of Global Storage Channels at IBM Storage Solutions.

His executive leadership experience also includes: CMO and Senior VP of Alliances for all-flash storage provider Violin Memory, and Senior Vice President of Product Management and Product Marketing for EMC's Enterprise & Mid-range Systems Division.

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Abstract

Being a channel partners is a great opportunity to take your business to the next level. But you don't work in a silo. As the author of this article explains, by understanding the projected 2026 channel trends, you will be more forward-thinking, better prepared for change, and able to make smarter decisions that will determine your future.

Introduction

The traditional ways of thinking about the channel are cracking and collapsing, but the sky is not falling. On the other hand, you don't need to put on rose-coloured glasses either. The informed assessment of channel trends takes reality as it is and will get you to where the action is.

All indications are that 2026 will see fluctuating macro-economic conditions, continuing to put pressure on growth and profitability for all types of companies, including enterprises, vendors and channel partners. One of the ways to grow and reduce costs amid economic uncertainty is consolidation. Mergers and acquisitions drive growth and enable higher profitability through economies of scale. This will not only happen in the channel in the new year, but it will also continue to happen across the IT field.



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Vendor consolidation has an impact on partners. When two companies that are merging bring together two product portfolios that complement each other – not compete with each other – new opportunities are created for partners. At the same time, they will also have to streamline, identify new competitive advantages, boost capabilities, and ride the wave of change, rather than fighting against this widespread consolidation across the IT landscape.

With a decade-long commitment to the channel that only keeps getting stronger, Infinidat excels at helping channel partners grow and improve profitability, as well as becoming more efficient. Infinidat is the #1 high-end enterprise storage solution provider when it comes to continuous improvement. Rather than being slowed down by the incumbents that cannot do what Infinidat does, partners can benefit significantly from Infinidat's agility, channel centricity, and strong business value proposition in a dynamic environment.

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Broadening the reach of channel partners for bigger impact

In addition to the consolidation across IT, we foresee partners being very deliberate in 2026 in expanding their reach. This will include geographic reach, but also expanding the types of companies to whom they sell. Partners who used to only sell to small-to-medium-sized businesses will start selling to large enterprises, including Fortune 500 companies. This will alter the competitive dynamics of the field, as highly motivated partners expand.

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This broader reach can be achieved organically or through acquisition or creative partnerships that will be groundbreaking. For example, one partner could be strong on the west coast and then join forces with a partner on the east coast of the U.S. to form a formidable new player that can take market share nationally. We've



already started to see this pattern unfold in the U.S. and across the globe. Partners should not stay static. You don't need a crystal ball to have solid reasons to believe that we may be entering the most transformative period in the tech industry in a generation.

Our award-winning enterprise storage solutions and next-generation data protection capabilities, gives our a channel partner true competitive advantages that are ideal when you are expanding your reach, whether geographically or by market segment. Furthermore, the level of support that you can get from Infinidat is unprecedented in the storage industry, and this can be extremely helpful and cost-effective amid fast-paced change.



Strategic expansion of channel partners into advanced services

Adding new, advanced services will be the main order of business for smart channel partners. This will include not only cybersecurity services and AI services, but it will also include cloud services. Yes, we expect to see partners transforming themselves by offering cloud services, like a traditional cloud service provider (CSP). Advancements in technology have democratized the ability to branch out and become a CSP or managed services provider (MSP) or managed hosting provider (MHP) and offer a host of lucrative services to enterprises.

The type of AI services that will be offered range from a service to help enterprises create their own Large Language Models (LLMs) and Small Language Models (SLMs) to a service that implements a Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) architecture to a service that does integration to optimise AI workloads and applications. The partners with strong software engineering talent will have an edge. But what's clear is that you can sell systems and software – and then meticulously wrap services around them to make your company and your offering more valuable.

Infinidat has engineered solutions and capabilities that channel partners can harness and build services around. Infinidat provides a set of integration tools and interfaces, as well as our Infuziast partner training program. Plus, Infinidat has in-house talent that you can tap into for extra support at no cost to you and your end-



Cyber has overtaken the channel in a pervasive way, forcing partners to incorporate cyber storage resilience into their solution offerings for enterprise customers. If a partner is not offering cyber resilient storage with built-in ransomware/malware protection and recovery, that partner can expect to lose deals. Cybersecurity is now at the centre of conversations about enterprise storage with end-user customers, and we will see a deluge of cyber, cyber, cyber in 2026.

This sweeping manifestation of cybersecurity integrated into enterprise storage implementations creates loads of opportunities for partners to win with an offering of next-generation data protection. Partners can be integral to helping set up or upgrade Security Operation Centres (SOCs) and then taking the next step with existing SOCs to integrate Automated Cyber Protection (ACP) with SOCs. This automates the taking of immutable snapshots, which are critical for fast recovery of a known clean copy of data after a cyberattack, such as ransomware or malware. On top of it, partners will be leveraging cyber detection and the whole stack of cyber capabilities that define cyber resilience and near-instantaneous recovery.

Infinidat has the most comprehensive cyber storage resilience solution portfolio in the industry and is the pioneer of next-generation data protection, which is an improvement over modern data protection and traditional data protection. Infinidat's InfiniSafe® software uniquely delivers all aspects of next-gen data protection, and Infinidat has a broad ecosystem of partners with cybersecurity solution vendors that cover the gamut of backup and recovery. Channel partners are also increasingly



winning deals by positioning InfiniBox® and InfiniGuard® as high performance cyber secure backup targets that dramatically reduce backup windows and substantially speed up recovery times.



AI is sweeping the channel

Digital transformation has morphed into AI transformation, and the AI revolution is accelerating at galactic speed. With AI everywhere, the channel will be swept up in its massive wave in 2026. The channel will see IT solution providers investing in continuing education to come up to speed on the latest developments in AI. Partners will need to master the convergence of AI and enterprise storage. What will be breathtaking will be the speed at which AI advances through the channel.

Enterprise storage has a central role in enterprise AI. Without the use of a storage-centric RAG architecture, enterprises will suffer from “AI hallucinations.” Partners have the opportunity to help enterprises make AI more accurate and more contextually relevant, especially for AI models to respond to user inquiries. It’s also an opportunity to improve the performance of storage infrastructure for AI workloads and applications.

Infinidat offers an AI RAG workflow deployment reference architecture, coupled with the powerful performance of our InfiniBox family – and, unlike the competition, what’s really attractive about it is that end-users do not need to buy any specialised equipment for it. Every conversation about Agentic AI should include Infinidat. Moreover, the excellent power efficiency of the InfiniBox means that IT leaders can transition power usage away from the storage infrastructure and put it where it’s needed with AI, which demands significant amounts of energy.