CIO JOURNAL

BMW Taps China Executive as CIO

Alexander Buresch to succeed Klaus Straub, who had been in the CIO post since 2014

BMW said Alexander Buresch, who led the car maker's strategy and joint ventures in China, will take on the CIO post Jan. 1

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By *Agam Shah*
Oct. 29, 2019 6:18 pm ET

BMW AG named a China-focused executive as its chief information officer after the departure of its previous IT chief, who had been in the role since 2014.

Alexander Buresch, who led the German luxury-car maker's strategy and joint ventures in China, will take on the CIO post Jan. 1. He succeeds Klaus Straub, whose resignation BMW confirmed earlier this month. The company declined to comment on when or why Mr. Straub resigned.

Mr. Buresch will be based in Munich. As CIO, he will lead BMW's IT department and cloud strategy while contributing to the auto maker's modernization effort, which includes self-driving technology and digital in-vehicle services.

The company is using Microsoft Corp.'s Azure cloud-computing services to equip its vehicles with voice-assistant, navigation and location-based services. BMW is also using Amazon.com Inc.'s Amazon Web Services cloud service for applications such as car customization.

"CIOs are at the center of digital technologies that auto companies are using to optimize their operations, speed up product development and help sell products through digital channels," said Michael Ramsey, senior research director at research and advisory firm Gartner Inc.

Mr. Buresch's IT team also will support BMW's production and logistics efforts, shepherding technologies like virtual reality and robotics.

The company has more than 3,000 assembly-plant machines, robots and autonomous-transport systems connected by software with a central Internet-of-Things platform.

Speaking earlier this year with CIO Journal, Mr. Straub, the former CIO, described the issues associated with integrating software with production-line equipment. "It's a

significant challenge, since we cannot simply interrupt production and halt the assembly lines in order to deploy new software," he said.

He described his strategy of building teams to better integrate software and hardware in its Internet-of-Things system as "100% agile—a holistic journey along four core dimensions: processes, technology, structure and culture."

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