**Key Takeaways from Interview with Shyam Sundhar Venkataraman at United Airlines**

**Overview:** United Airlines launched a strategic initiative to modernize its IT infrastructure and streamline architectural frameworks to enhance efficiency, security, and compliance. This case study explores efforts to standardize architecture governance, reduce technical debt, and optimize cloud infrastructure. Creospan played a key role by providing expertise in solution architecture, technical problem-solving, and observability, while also improving SaaS Windows reliability and cloud optimization.

**Industry:** Aviation/Transportation.

**Domain:** Enterprise Architecture.

**Person Interviewed:** Shyam Sundhar Venkataraman, Enterprise Architect, Creospan/United Airlines.

**Key Business Drivers:**

* Aligning enterprise architecture with the company’s long-term vision.
* Enhancing compliance and governance across portfolios.
* Reducing technical debt by phasing out legacy systems.
* Standardizing AWS services to ensure enterprise-wide conformity.
* Improving user experience through increased reliability and performance.

**Project Objectives:** The project sought to:

* Align multiple portfolio architectures with the broader enterprise framework.
* Replace outdated technologies and legacy systems with approved, modern solutions.
* Improve observability, logging, and technology lifecycle management.
* Implement reliability patterns for SaaS and Windows environments.

**Project Scope and Implementation:** This initiative is categorized as a revenue-generating, cost-saving, expansion-focused, and improvement-driven project. The team focused on:

* Replacing legacy systems to eliminate technical debt.
* Implementing strategic enterprise architecture policies.
* Ensuring compliance with governance standards.
* Enhancing the user experience by improving speed and reliability.

**Challenges:** The project encountered several challenges, including:

* **Technical Challenges:** Outdated and mixed technologies required integration and replacement.
* **Business Challenges:** Achieving strategic alignment and consensus across teams.

**Solutions:**

* Conduct collaborative discussions with all stakeholders.
* Restrict project scope to ensure manageable implementation phases.
* Implement an Agile methodology to allow iterative improvements and adaptability.

**Users Impacted:** Primarily internal with some external implications.

**Key Outcomes:**

* **System Performance:** Increased reliability and efficiency across platforms.
* **Governance & Compliance:** Strengthened adherence to enterprise policies.
* **Revenue Growth:** Improved enterprise architecture contributed to revenue optimization.
* **Cost Savings:** Achieved annual savings of over $100,000.
* **Operational Efficiency:** Reduced processing time from 48 hours to 20 hours.
* **Reduced Operating Costs:** Streamlined IT operations, enhancing daily performance.

**Team Composition:** The projects involved multiple stakeholders from United Airlines, Creospan, and external vendors:

* **Enterprise Architecture Team (United Airlines):**
  + Managing Director: Ninos Gabriel.
  + Director of Architecture: Krishna Srinivasan.
  + Principal Enterprise Architects: Jenny Zhou, Raj Thomas, Harold D’Souza.
* **Creospan Team:**
  + Shyam Sundhar Venkataraman (Enterprise Architect).
  + Ron Smith (Enterprise Architect).
  + Kevin Dooley (Enterprise Architect).
* **External Vendor:** Infosys (Enterprise Architect).
* **Vendor Collaboration:** Creospan team members (Shyam Sundhar Venkataraman, Kevin Dooley, and Ron Smith), one Infosys enterprise architect, and additional vendors in portfolio teams.
* **Other Vendors: Kforce, TCS.**
* **Other Contributors:** Scrum Masters, Engineers, Developers.

**Project Timeline:** Varies based on the project portfolio.

* **Shyam Sundhar Venkataraman’s project timeline:** Ongoing.
* **Other project portfolio timeline:** 6 months to a year.

**Conclusion:** This enterprise architecture governance and modernization initiative significantly enhanced United’s IT framework by improving compliance, modernizing legacy technologies, and aligning portfolio architectures with the enterprise vision. Creospan’s expertise was instrumental in driving strategic alignment, fostering innovation, and ensuring successful execution.

**Prepared By:** Donna Susan Mathew