

A Bold Vision for IRI

By Mike Vogel

CHICAGO - When John Freeland was named president and chief executive officer of Information Resources Inc. (IRI) in October 2007 he hit the ground running. "The industry we serve is in need of a transformation," says Freeland. "We have this valuable, vast amount of data you will not find in any other industry. That data must be optimally utilized."

The challenge starts with marrying next-generation technology and analytics with IRI's core business of providing market and consumer information for its clients, says Freeland.

"We are not trying to play yesterday's game of just doing market intelligence data," he says. "While we think that is important to our clients, it's more of a starting point. What our strength is, what is in our DNA, is unmatched analytics capability."

The other part of IRI's core competence is technology, believes Freeland.

"So we are trying to reinvent this business with sophisticated technology to help our clients answer issues of importance to them in terms of brand building, knowing what the competition is doing, whether new product introductions are working and so forth."

Freeland believes IRI is providing increasingly high-value-added services that help its clients on such issues as growing market share in a category.

"My vision is that IRI exemplifies client value - that when we walk in the



John Freeland

door of a major consumer products company or retailer we are there to help them raise their performance through a combination of superior data, technology, analytics and insights," he says.

Freeland recognizes that there are good consulting firms in the business that can do the analytics but do not have the data, and vice versa. "Our unique value proposition is that we can address our clients' needs holistically across their data, technology and the analytics in a way that no other organization can," he says.

Freeland has more than 28 years of experience in achieving superior financial results based on client value creation.

Before coming to IRI he served as

president of worldwide operations for salesforce.com, a pioneer in software as a service.

Freeland was responsible for the company's Successforce portfolio of services and business alliances.

"What I got from that experience was the importance of making certain that when we introduce new technology, we never lose sight of our own credibility in executional excellence," says Freeland.

Prior to joining salesforce.com Freeland served as a member of Accenture's executive committee during a successful 26-year career.

As the head of Accenture's customer relationship management (CRM) practice, Freeland built the business from \$1.2 billion to \$3.7 billion in only five years, creating the largest business consulting service line at the company.

While Freeland is optimistic about the virtually unlimited possibilities at IRI, he is determined to go about it in the right way.

"Even as we build a reputation in the market for innovation, we don't want to ever forget the importance of our core business," says Freeland.

"We remind ourselves what the client is really buying from us is a core service around managing data, generating reports, and doing it in a way that's very high quality and timely. Doing this correctly will give us the right to talk to our clients about other things."