



Executive Q&A with Vamsi Tirnati, Chief Technology Officer

To start, can you tell us about your career path and what your role at Armstrong entails?

Technology always fascinated me. I graduated from the University of Michigan with a master's degree in Computer Science. I began my career as a senior programmer with an electronic cataloging startup in Colorado in 1999. From there, I joined a large global team at EDS/HP/DXC and spent the next 15 years working directly with Fortune 50 transportation clients.

I feel honored and humbled to lead the technology strategy at Armstrong. My role is to drive a series of innovative and growth-oriented initiatives. As CTO, I look forward to combining my deep industry experience with Armstrong's vision to be the best intermediary in the market. It's a culture that generates great ideas, so I see myself as an integral part of bringing those ideas to life – from concept to design to production.

Can you tell us a bit about your team at Armstrong?

My team is responsible for addressing the operational and business needs of our agents and customers. Our proprietary Transportation Management System (TMS) is at the core of Armstrong's technology stack, so we provide 24/7 support for the platform. We also work with third-party providers to enhance process workflows, automation and enable new capabilities by integrating Armstrong's unique strengths with vendor capabilities. Everything we do is aligned to support Armstrong's strategic business objectives and growth plans.

What do you foresee being the biggest challenges in your role as CTO at Armstrong?

Armstrong has enjoyed a healthy and exciting growth trajectory in recent years. We've offered more services to our network, resulting in increased revenue and improved capabilities. However, rapid growth also brings increased complexities and challenges.

Delivering a next-generation platform with distributed and loosely coupled architecture based



on micro-services will continue to be a challenge for Armstrong – one we feel well-positioned to overcome. Enhancing user experiences is at the forefront of our strategy. We also maintain a strong focus on increasing our automation capabilities.

Any time companies grow, sustaining that growth is both a priority and a challenge. To support Armstrong's growth, we will continue to scale our engineering and product management practices and look for ways to standardize IT, Help Desk, and support operations.

While we enjoy being among the top 25 freight brokerage firms in the industry, we're always striving to meet the ever-changing needs of our agent network, business partners, and internal teams.

What excites you most about your role as CTO for a fast-growing logistics company?

Joining Armstrong was a significant milestone in my career. The prospect of growth excites me the most. We strive for the highest agent and customer retention rates in the industry. Our agents stay because we help them succeed, over and over again.

We do that by delivering streamlined back-office operational support and running our own business as effectively and efficiently as possible. My role as CTO is particularly exciting within that framework of success.

Armstrong is uniquely positioned to become the 'most sought out' technology player in the industry, and we take that responsibility very seriously. We continuously challenge our thinking and beliefs in building meaningful technology and delivering that to our employees, agents, carriers, and customers.

Why is it important for agents and customers to know that Armstrong Transport Group is a technology company?

The transportation and logistics industry is incredibly dynamic – always changing. While technology has been present in the industry for many decades, this is an exciting time because we see technology adoption paving the way for more capable organizations.

At Armstrong, we are making significant yet strategic investments in technology because we recognize that our customers ultimately reap the benefits of a more informed, efficient, and productive freight broker. We also want to make it easier for agent owners to broker freight. For example, a new Armstrong agent can adopt our TMS to get fully up-and-running in less than a day -- a marked competitive advantage in a fast-paced industry with high levels of volatility.



Ultimately, we are committed to finding more ways to say ‘yes’ to our customers, and that comes through a combination of outstanding customer service and innovative technology. It’s a balance of both.

Which trends most interest you as we approach 2021?

On a global scale, we’ve seen unprecedented events, so in many ways, it will be interesting to see how organizations recover. Times of uncertainty often bring about significant change, so I expect to see a fair amount of innovation stem from the complexities we’ve experienced.

As someone fascinated by technology, open platforms, communication, and collaboration are trends that I watch closely. Technology that has a human impact interests me. For instance, I’m not a Facebook user, but when a hurricane or tsunami hits, and there’s a deep need to connect networks and mobilize resources to bring help to hard-hit areas, that’s an exciting use of technology.

As an organization, we monitor business and market trends and closely align technology trends to meet those changing needs. Be it a 5G network rollout, increased visibility of assets through IoT, or enhanced user and adoption experiences through mobile and cloud programs, technological boundaries are always pushed and challenged.

What advice would you give someone at the start of their technology career?

Steve Jobs said, “Stay hungry. Stay foolish.” The aspect of never being satisfied with the status quo resonates with me – the idea of always pushing yourself to learn more. To me, staying foolish alludes to building a willingness to try new concepts or ideas that conventional wisdom believes cannot be done.

I’m a big believer in the “lifelong learner” mindset. Given the pace at which the transportation and logistics industry changes, having a mentor can help you create, navigate, and thrive in your career.

Also, never shy away from pushing your boundaries. Fail fast and, if you must, lean on team members who can help you build strengths. My advice is to think of your career as a continuous learning and development journey while appreciating how technology enables businesses worldwide.

