

From jet skis to snowmobiles: through brands such as Sea-Doo, Can-Am, and Ski-Doo, Canadian manufacturer BRP develops innovative recreational and powersports vehicles for use on the water, in the snow, and off-road. © BRP

How IT is driving innovation, resilience, and AI at BRP

03/09/2026 Interview with BRP's CIO: Stéphane Bilodeau shares how BRP turns digital capabilities into measurable business impact.

As Chief Information Officer of BRP, Stéphane Bilodeau operates at the intersection of technology, business, and innovation. Responsible for the digital backbone of a global powersports leader, he sees IT not as a support function, but as a strategic enabler that connects every part of the organization – from product development and manufacturing to operational excellence to customer experience.

Bilodeau explains why reliable, predictable IT remains the foundation of success, how BRP turns artificial intelligence into measurable business value, and why data quality is becoming a critical competitive advantage. He also shares his perspective on the opportunities and risks of AI, his evolving role as CIO, and the importance of balancing technological progress with the human experiences that shape both work and life.

Mr. Bilodeau, what does information technology have to do with snowmobiles?

Stéphane Bilodeau: A lot of people associate us primarily with snowmobiles. But we design, engineer, manufacture, and distribute a whole range of power sports vehicles including Can-Am side-by-sides and ATVs, See-Doo watercrafts and pontoons, Ski-Doo and Lynx snowmobiles, Can-Am electric motorcycles, and three-wheel vehicles. And just like any modern vehicle manufacturer, we would not exist without IT. It supports every function of the organization, from design, to engineering, manufacturing, sales, and distribution. In fact, IT is the only function that touches every employee, every minute of every working day. Therefore, employees' opinion towards IT is greatly influenced by the stability and scalability of our systems, the responsiveness of our services, the predictability of our deliveries, the risks we mitigate, and increasingly, the pace at which we drive innovation. So, IT is much more than supporting snowmobiles, it is at the core of everything we do.

That also includes the IT hotline where people complain if something doesn't work?

Yes, exactly. If an employee calls the help desk and waits 20 minutes, or if the person on the other end cannot resolve the issue, then it does not matter if we have delivered the most advanced AI solution or the best system in the background. That moment defines the experience. IT starts with a very simple question: does it work? If it does not work, nothing else matters. Our role can shift quickly from enabling innovation to becoming highly visible when something goes wrong.

What does "good IT" look like?

In my view, one of the highest compliments for an IT organization is that it is predictable. Predictable in terms of system stability, predictable in service quality, and predictable in delivering projects. When those projects are delivered on time, on budget, and at the expected quality and value, that is exactly what the business expects. It is the baseline. Cybersecurity is a good example. Hackers only need to be successful once. We need to be successful every time.

At the same time, the CIO role is becoming more important in driving innovation, especially around AI. How do you approach that?

It always starts with understanding the business. We work closely with our colleagues across functions to understand the challenges they are facing and where value can be created. When it comes to AI specifically, our strategy is simple: solving complex problems that are worth solving. We deliberately focus on problems and opportunities, where traditional approaches have not worked, and where the outcome creates meaningful business value.

Can you give an example?

Take something like laser cutting metal. On the surface, it sounds simple, but it is a very complex problem with a multitude of variables in order to minimize waste. For years, teams have been trying to optimize that process. With AI, we approached the problem differently. We spent time understanding

the data and the process, and then we built a proof of concept within a few weeks. The result was a significant optimization and, in financial terms, significant savings across all our manufacturing sites. That is exactly the type of problem we focus on – complex, long-standing challenges where AI can create real impact.

How do you ensure that these initiatives create value and don't just remain technical experiments?

From the beginning, we always start with a business case. It is not about creating long documents. In most cases, the business case fits on a single page. The key questions are: what problem are we trying to solve, how will we measure success, and what is the expected impact? Then we work iteratively. On a weekly basis, we ask two simple questions: Is the problem still worth solving and can we solve it? If we get a no to one of those questions, we stop: maybe the data is not sufficient, or the technology is not there yet. If the answer is yes, we will refine the model and update the business case. At the end of the process, finance validates the results, and the business decides whether to deploy the solution. The focus is always on value, not on technology for its own sake.

Do you build these AI capabilities internally?

AI is a strategic capability. That means we are building strong internal teams. With external partners we are very selective. We are looking for partners who have solved similar problems before. I often use the analogy of climbing mountains. External partners can act like Sherpas – they help guide you, avoid mistakes, and move faster. But you still need to climb the mountain yourself.

Is AI the solution for every problem?

With AI we are clearly in a hype cycle. Many people expect massive productivity gains almost immediately. In reality, progress has been more gradual, but the benefits are real. Every technology goes through a hype cycle. Over time, the real use cases emerge, and the technology finds its best commercial and societal adoption. But with AI, we face a major unknown: it is the first ever invention capable of improving itself. Without a doubt, interesting days are ahead of us.

How does AI influence the experience of your products?

For us, it is very important that AI enhances the experience but does not replace it. Our products are about emotion, experience, and interaction with the environment. That should not be lost. At the same time, AI can add value in areas such as safety, maintenance, and convenience. So, it is about finding the right balance.

What role does data play in your organization?

Data is central. We generate large amounts of it across the entire value chain, from design and engineering to manufacturing and product usage. The key is ensuring reliable, high-quality data. In the past, poor data quality may have led to relatively minor issues, such as incorrect reporting or targeting.

Today, when you use AI to predict outcomes or optimize processes, poor data quality can lead to significant mistakes and a negative financial impact.

How does AI change the way people work with data?

Recently, we introduced AI capabilities on top of our new data platforms. Previously, if someone wanted an analysis, they would request it, wait for a report, review the results, and then ask follow-up questions. That process could take weeks. Today, users can directly ask questions in natural language and get answers immediately. It completely changes how people interact with data and how quickly they can make decisions.

Does that also change your role as CIO?

Yes, but perhaps not in the way one might think. My role is not to drive the business forward directly. My role is to provide tools, capabilities, and the environment that enables the business to move forward. I often say: we provide the tools and capabilities, and then we explore together what is possible.

Looking at AI more personally – are you enthusiastic or concerned?

I would say both. On one hand, I am fascinated by what is possible today and tomorrow. When I see teams resolving complex problems in a matter of weeks that previously seemed impossible, that is very impressive. On the other hand, there is also a certain level of concern, especially when I think about the future and about my children. We are in a world of exponential change, and it is merely impossible to predict what this world will look like in five or ten years.

What does that mean for the next generation?

It is very difficult to predict the skills or jobs that will be relevant in the future. If you look back ten years, many of today's roles did not exist. So instead of trying to define specific career paths, I believe it is more important to develop adaptability, curiosity, soft-skills, and the ability to learn continuously. When I look at my children, I see that they already have a different level of digital awareness. They can very often distinguish what is real from what is manipulated better than I can.

Is there anything technology should never replace?

Yes, definitely! For me, that would be something very personal: putting my kids to bed. That is a moment where you connect, where you talk about the day and what comes next. It is something human, something emotional. That is not something I would ever want to delegate to a machine.

Info

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Image Sublines

Path: How IT is driving innovation, resilience, and AI at BRP/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Stéphane Bilodeau, Chief Information Officer at BRP, 2026, Porsche Consulting GmbH
Subline: "When it comes to AI, our strategy is simple: we focus on problems and opportunities, where traditional approaches have not worked, and where the outcome creates meaningful business value," says Stéphane Bilodeau, Chief Information Officer at BRP. © Porsche Consulting/Steve Gerrard

Path: How IT is driving innovation, resilience, and AI at BRP/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Production facility of BRP, Valcourt, Canada, 2026, Porsche Consulting GmbH
Subline: A look inside the production facility: In final assembly, production team members perform the finishing touches on the Can-Am Spyder three-wheel vehicle from BRP. © Porsche Consulting/Steve Gerrard

Path: How IT is driving innovation, resilience, and AI at BRP/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Jan Boris Wintzenburg, Head of Communications and Marketing at Porsche Consulting; Stéphane Bilodeau, Chief Information Officer at BRP; Gregor Harman, Managing Director of Porsche Consulting USA (l-r), Valcourt, Canada, 2026, Porsche Consulting GmbH
Subline: At BRP's corporate headquarters in Valcourt, Canada: Stéphane Bilodeau with Gregor Harman, Managing Director of Porsche Consulting USA (right), and Jan Boris Wintzenburg, Head of Communications and Marketing at Porsche Consulting (left). © Porsche Consulting/Steve Gerrard

Path: How IT is driving innovation, resilience, and AI at BRP/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Stéphane Bilodeau, Chief Information Officer at BRP, Lynx Rave RE, Valcourt, Canada, 2026, Porsche Consulting GmbH
Subline: Stéphane Bilodeau with the Lynx Rave RE, one of the most iconic high-performance trail snowmobiles from BRP's Lynx brand. As Chief Information Officer, he is driving innovation and AI initiatives across BRP. © Porsche Consulting/Steve Gerrard

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