



Executive **INSIGHTS**

10 Questions with Keith Carlson, Relativity

Keith Carlson is the Chief Technology Officer of Relativity



1. Tell us about your company and where you see the biggest areas for growth in the next 5 years.

Relativity is a global legal technology company headquartered in Chicago with more than 1,000 employees. Our e-discovery platform helps our more than 180,000 users organize data, discover the truth, and act on it. Users in over 43 countries use our software to manage large volumes of data and quickly identify key issues during litigation, internal investigations, and compliance projects.

The biggest areas of growth we'll see as a company over the next five years will be around data and how we manage it. Relativity's software handles petabytes of data, and that number increases every day given the myriad of new data types, users, and use cases that flow into the software every day. To deal with increased data demands and complex unstructured data problems, you need a flexible and extensible product, like RelativityOne, our Software-as-a-Service platform, that is better equipped to deal with the ever-changing data problems our users

deal with every day. We're excited to watch the continued growth of RelativityOne and we also expect to grow in areas adjacent to e-discovery, like compliance, thanks to our Relativity Trace proactive compliance monitoring product. Overall, it's an exciting period of growth for the company and I'm excited to grow with it.





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2. What are the most important decisions you make as a leader of your organization?

The first aspect I look at is: Do I have the right people in place to make our team successful? Making sure that I put my people in the right place, with the right skills and experience, on the right projects, helps everyone succeed and drives better results for our collective business. The other thing I always look for is having metrics in place that effectively summarize the engineering department’s direct impact on the business. These metrics help guide decisions, workforce allocations, and other critical decisions to ensure that we’re setting the department up for success.

3. What characteristics do you look for when hiring on your team?

It might sound simplistic, but leadership is a key trait I look for throughout the hiring process. Whether you’re an

individual contributor, program lead, or more senior, it is paramount that each person has the ability and aptitude to lead, so that we become a team of leaders instead of having more of a top-down approach. I’m not looking for someone to please me or always say yes to my suggestions; I’m looking for someone who can confidently make data-driven decisions and take initiative when solving problems within the business.

4. Tell us about an experience, or a person, who influenced you or had a major impact on your career?

The most impactful experience was at Amazon Web Services where I built and operated their cloud fraud prevention, billing and criminal investigations over my 7+ years there. While Relativity is growing fast, AWS, in 2011 when I joined it was the fastest growing tech company ever. Being a part of that presented a unique learning opportunity. There was no way to cleanly manage anything, it forced me to re-think how to manage for growth and scale. “Surviving” that period and the lessons I learned, gave me a set of tools that I will use the rest of my career.





5. What inspires you each day?

I think it is so cool that we get to come to work everyday and solve crazy hard problems in the data space – I thrive on it, crave it, and constantly think about it. Being energized by solving big data problems is a big part of who I am and is why I enjoy my job at Relativity so much.

“Employ great people and be customer-obsessed. If you’re able to be effective on both strategies, you’ll get to a good place.”

6. What’s one characteristic you think every leader should have?

The guiding philosophy for me is two-fold: Employ great people and be customer-obsessed. If you’re able to be effective on both strategies, you’ll get to a good place.

7. What’s one thing happening at your company you’re most excited about?

I’m thrilled that Relativity is moving to become a talent-first organization. This focus is the number one thing our new CEO Mike Gamson highlighted when he first joined and I’m excited to work with him and the rest of the team to ensure that Relativity continues to hire, grow, and empower the top tech talent on a local and global scale.

8. Separate from your own, what industry are you watching and learning from, and why?

I’m primarily watching the big data industry as it is going to impact every single part of our lives in the next 20

years and it’s still not figured out. Pieces of that industry, like deep learning and the continued adoption of artificial intelligence, are two areas that I continue to be particularly fascinated about.

9. Outside of work, what does your perfect day look like?

All of my sons are currently in college so a perfect day for me would any opportunity to spend time with my wife and my boys, which seems to get rarer and rarer these days. Along with that, I love to golf and to read scientific research on cutting-edge topics like space exploration and propulsion, battery innovation, and the new discoveries about aging.

10. What are you reading right now OR top 3 business books you would recommend?

It’s not books as much as it is research reports. I geek out on all the crazy cool research being conducted. Here are three recent ones that have stuck with me:

- [Machine Learning-based wing structure](#)
- [Age Reversal – a first hint that the body’s ‘biological age’ can be reversed](#)
- [A stealthy Harvard startup wants to reverse aging in dogs, and humans could be next](#)



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