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Training is the name of the game for digital transformation in mining

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Innovation is a key factor in sustainable and safe mining operations, and earlier this month Massachusetts-based InterSystems and Chile's national piloting center for mining technologies (CNP) signed an alliance to improve testing processes of industrial solutions within the mining industry.

BNamericas talked with InterSystems country manager, Martín Kozak (pictured right), and CNP general manager, Patricio Aguilera (pictured left), about how digital transformation could boost productivity.

BNamericas: Do you think Chilean miners are ready for the digital transformation?

Kozak: The challenge within the region and their industries is defined by inclusion and technological renewal, but also by human resources development which is a key factor for the progress of digital transformation.

BNamericas: Considering this worldwide health crisis, can technology contribute to the operational continuity of the mining industry?

Kozak: This pandemic scenario is a path for innovation and growing because nowadays we have solutions to problems. Key factors are the highest availability of technical aspects, less maintenance efforts and a strategic development plan including technology and workers properly trained to use it.

BNamericas: Do you think it's a good time to bet on remote operations?

Aguilera: The current crisis contributes to speeding up innovation and involves changes in the way we work. The challenge is how to train workers, how to manage those retraining processes, allowing people to add value with more knowledge. In mining, digital transformation must include production, health and safety of workers and a smaller environmental footprint.

Kozak: Digital transformation is already changing the way we work and there are jobs that will continue to change. We'll have disruptive changes in all industries, but we must see how we can convert it in a sustainable process to train mineworkers.

BNamericas: What are those [digital tools](#) contributing to increasing mining productivity?

Aguilera: Mining productivity is related to the need to guarantee the operational continuity and digital tools like big data, real data on equipment algorithms, remote control and automation contribute to finding solutions to mining challenges.

Kozak: We could mention real time monitoring of production and mine planning, also cloud storage of those solutions focused on [internet of things](#) infrastructure.

BNamericas: What kind of support does CNP and InterSystems offer to mining suppliers and entrepreneurs focused on technologies?

Aguilera: A key factor is to potentiate a smart mining industry with big data projects and remote operations. We think there's a chance to explore and test digital solutions in mining.

Kozak: We're a tech provider and through the alliance with the CNP we are able to transfer the knowledge about technologies for high impact projects, performance and scalability with requirements such as big data processing, analysis and storage.

BNamericas: What are the specific services included in the alliance?



Aguilera: Tech solutions entrepreneurs need to test their products in an environment similar to a real mining operation but it's too difficult for them to do it in a mining facility, because miners need to guarantee operational continuity to reach production guidance. So we're a neutral organization with all the capacities to test new technologies in an industrial environment and contribute to introducing suppliers to big miners.

Kozak: This alliance includes training to use the IRIS platform [InterSystems data platform], understanding databases, systems integration and analytics to monitor and control the operation in real time. It also includes six months [renewable] of free licensing for training and piloting, and training in design thinking, business models for digital products, among others.

BNamericas: In which stages of a project do you find problems related to scalability and interoperability?

Aguilera: In scalability phases in real environments. It's different to make tests in a lab or with a prototype scale and then do it inside a mining plant, because there we have less control of some aspects and there's a bigger impact.

Photos: *CNP, InterSystems*

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