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A collage of six illustrations showing people working in various settings: a man at a kitchen counter, a woman at a desk, a woman at a kitchen island, a man in a field, a woman lying on a sofa, and a man on a couch. The text "COVER STORY" is in the top left, "6" is in the top right, and "A WINDOW TO THE FUTURE OF WORK" is in large blue letters across the center.



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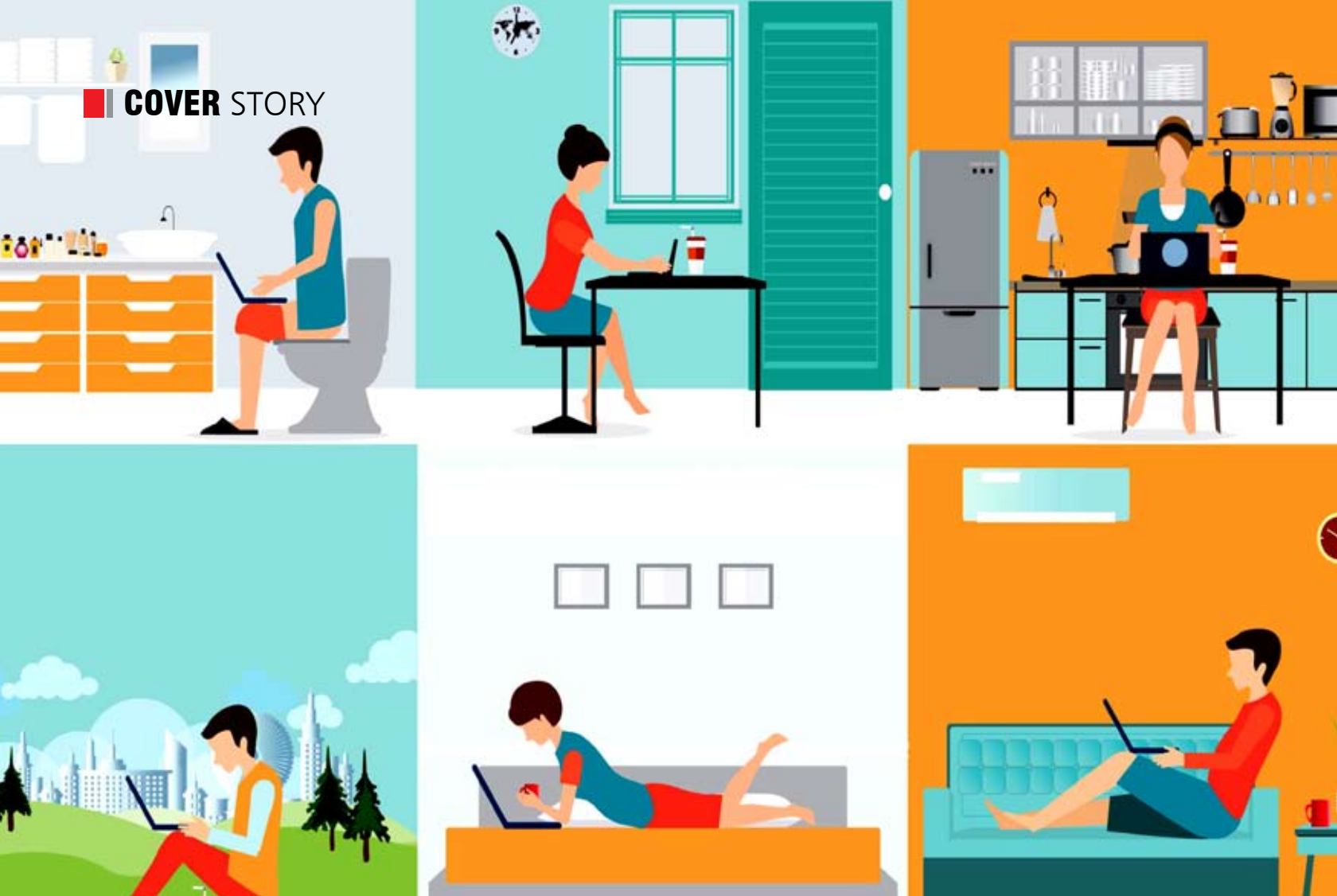
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A WINDOW TO THE FUTURE OF WORK

Very little will remain unchanged post Covid-19: business, socioeconomics, work and quite simply, life as we know it. In fact, as organizations strive to build a sustainable work strategy, enabling remote work seamlessly is going to be one of the most critical transformations that companies would want to go through. Let's explore how enterprises are rethinking their work, employee and organizational culture strategies with the changing work environment.

Amit Singh

If there's one thing we can all agree on, it's that the world of work is changing quickly. Organizations no longer have the luxury of waiting to see what happens. As the pandemic rages again across the country with daily

numbers breaking all-time records, business leaders need to rethink workforce and employee planning, management, performance and experience strategies.

The Covid-19 pandemic is

far from over. Indeed, never has independent India faced a crisis of the magnitude that is currently confronting the nation (with the exception of the Partition). India has never witnessed several lakhs of people getting afflicted by a

deadly virus everyday or the scale of current sufferings – visible in overflowing hospitals, distressed homes and even in over-worked crematoriums.

In these circumstances

and amid rapidly spreading virus, remote work or a hybrid approach seems to be the long-term strategy for organizations. In fact, widespread remote working has been quickly adopted as the norm by organizations. As per a recent research from Capgemini covering over 500 organizations and 5000

employees across the globe, 3/4th of organizations expect 30 percent or more of their employees to be working remotely, and over a quarter expect over 70 percent of their staff to be working remotely.

Organizations expect remote models to work

well in functions such as IT, finance, and accounting. Technology companies are far more aggressive in allowing permanent remote work to its employees. Twitter, for example, was the first company to allow its employees to work from home permanently. Similarly, Microsoft allowed its employees to work from home freely for less than 50 percent of their working week, or move to a permanent remote work upon approval from managers.

Productivity amplified

Organizations are reporting productivity gains due to remote working and expect them to be sustained post pandemic. "As per recent studies, almost 70 percent of the remote users feel that they are more productive, and 83 percent of the remote workers are satisfied with a bit of flexibility working from home. Employees can manage their time to meet family as well as work commitments, which was not possible while working from office. They are also saving time spent on daily commuting," shares Ravindra Kelkar, Area Vice President, Indian Subcontinent, Citrix Systems.

As per recent Capgemini survey across ten sectors and nine countries, 63 percent of organizations have reported productivity

gains in Q3-2020, due to remote working. In India, 65 percent organizations reported productivity gains in Q3-2020, as compared to 28 percent companies which reported decline in productivity. In terms of magnitude, average productivity gains range from 11-22 percent. Employees point to a reduced commute time and flexible work schedule as the key reasons why productivity has increased. For employees who reported a productivity decline, the main reason is feeling more distracted at home than at work. Other predominant reasons include difficulty in remote collaboration with co-workers and in connecting virtually with clients and customers.

From a functional standpoint, IT/Digital functions lead the way with 68 percent organizations reporting gains in productivity, followed by customer service (60 percent) and sales & marketing (59 percent). Digitization and use of technologies such as AI have helped organizations deliver improved productivity in these functions. In terms of magnitude, IT/Digital shows the highest weighted average of productivity gains of 14-31 percent, followed by customer service (12-27 percent).

Moreover, nearly 70 percent of organizations



“ Almost 70 percent of the remote users feel that they are more productive, and 83 percent of the remote workers are satisfied with a bit of flexibility working from home. ”

RAVINDRA KELKAR,
General Manager, Area Vice President, Indian Subcontinent, Citrix Systems

PRESENT AND FUTURE OF WORK

Present Gains

65%

organizations in India reported productivity gains in Q3-2020

11-22%

was the average productivity gains by the organizations

68%

organizations reported gains in productivity in IT/Digital functions

88%

organizations realized real-estate cost savings with remote working

42%

organizations say that the pandemic accelerated their office consolidation plans

99%

of companies in India have saved on business travel and allowances in Q3-2020

92%

of organizations overall project savings due to lesser travel over the next two to three years

73%

executives have started to hire from locations in different time zones

84%

organizations have accelerated the digitalization of work processes

Present Pains

62%

employees in India feel disconnected from their organization due to remote working

58%

employees feel remote working hinders tasks that require internal/external collaboration

56%

male and 52% female respondents report burnout as an issue

56%

employees fear the stresses and demands of being always-on

54%

employees fear that remote work will hamper their career growth in organization

54%

employees fear that remote work will shrink their network both inside and outside the organization

48%

employees feel that they are being micro-managed in a remote setup

59%

employees feel that they are surveilled by the remote working and productivity measurement tools

63%

business users don't get access to data at the speed at which they need to make decisions

59%

employees say that the organization's data access policies result in them spending more time on seeking approvals than actually doing analysis

Future Gains

70%

organizations believe that the productivity gains of remote working are sustainable beyond the pandemic

97%

insurance organizations are projecting real-estate cost savings in the next 2-3 years

71%

organizations are expecting employees to permanently relocate outside of big cities

48%

of the executives see their total office space needs reducing by at least 10%

72%

organizations mention hub and spoke offices to support proximity to workforce/customers as a priority

70%

organizations mention more flexible workspaces (co-working spaces, serviced offices) as a priority

68%

organizations mention larger office footprint in smaller/Tier II cities or towns as a priority

70%

organizations will hire a fluid workforce in the future, such as freelancers or independent workers



“ Work from home should be balanced with home, work and the personal lives. Don’t make your days 24/7 work from home. We must continue the work from office approach of respecting employee’s geographical hours. ”

CHARULATA RAVI KUMAR,
Managing Director, Accenture

believe that the productivity gains of remote working are sustainable beyond the pandemic. Based on an approximate calculation for productivity levels, the companies project an overall productivity rise of 17

percent in the next two to three years.

Always-on culture pains

Indeed the above figures

are quite impressive; however the question is whether organizations effectively managed the shift to remote work? Many people, including professionals, find it hard to switch off from work. While on-premises working allow people to separate work from home life and switch off from work, many remote employees feel the boundaries between personal and work life are blurring. Although technology has given us the power to work from anywhere at any time, it has also given us the ‘always-on culture.’

“Not everything is great about remote work. From an employee perspective, there is a feeling to be always-on, which leads to stress and burnout,” highlights Kelkar.

The always-on culture is impacting work because it affects workplace culture and it can lead to increased stress levels and burnout, which in turn can dampen productivity and performance.

A recent employee research finds that remote employee burnout is growing; In India, 62 percent of the employees feel disconnected from their organization due to remote working as compared to 56 percent globally. Of the employees who feel disconnected, 41 percent fall in the 31–40 age bracket. Moreover, 58 percent of

the employees feel remote working hinders tasks that require internal/external collaboration. Clearly, if organizations fail to support these next generation of leaders, they will not be able to retain them. By gender, burnout is an issue for 56 percent of male respondents and 52 percent of female.

“People are getting disconnected from the purpose of the organization as they’re working alone at home, distributed across the geography. This lack of interaction and socialization may disconnect them from the purpose of the organization. We’re already seeing that happening; in the last couple of months, we are seeing a lot of people moving jobs which is resulting in organizations losing talent,” underscores Dr Vishwanath Joshi, Chief People Officer, Hexaware Technologies.

This raises questions about whether productivity gains from remote working can be sustained.

Moreover, employees feel significant apprehension about long-term remote work, which impacts their engagement, satisfaction and productivity. For example, 56 percent of the employees fear the stresses and demands of being always-on. 54 percent fear that remote work will hamper their career growth in organization



and an equal percentage of employees fear that remote work will shrink their network both inside and outside the organization.

Revisiting organizational culture

Organizations need to address the burn-out by



“When people see and appreciate how their individual contributions help to advance goals they support and find meaningful, they’re more likely to be engaged, motivated and perform at a high level.”

DR. VISHWANATH JOSHI,
Chief People Officer, Hexaware Technologies

nurturing a culture that encourages individuals to switch off from work when they’re out of business hours and with family. Not doing so can potentially have negative effects on a company’s overall performance.

“Work from home should be balanced with home life, work life and the personal life. Don’t make your days 24/7 work from home. Organizations must ensure that people continue the work from office approach of respecting employee’s geographical hours,” says Charulata Ravi Kumar, Managing Director, Accenture.

Although 78 percent of organizations say that they are focusing on developing a culture that provides more autonomy to employees, 48 percent of employees feel that they are being micro-managed in a remote setup, as per recent studies. Moreover, 59 percent of employees feel that they are surveilled by the remote working and productivity measurement tools deployed by organizations. The issue is very pronounced in India. This is a wakeup call for organizations about designing a future way of working, where employees feel valued and trusted and have the work-life balance needed to sustain productivity gains.

Organizations need to

look closely at employee stress management, from making well-being a part of organizational culture. In fact, companies that thrive in this challenging environment will be those that see it as an opportunity to work, lead, and organize differently.

Companies like Hexaware Technologies are differentiating themselves by inducing trust and connect among the employees. “We established forums to share information in a very open and transparent manner. One such forum is Leadership Lantern, which literally means leaders who are with lantern showing the way that can actually help build trust,” explains Joshi.

He adds that Hexaware didn’t want employees to get disconnected from even the top leaders. “So, we started a forum called Coffee-with-Keech; our CEO is fondly called Keech. This initiative became an amazing forum where a lot of ideas came in. We acted on those ideas to make significant changes in our ways of working. In addition, with a series of fun events with underlying message of engagement, we connected with not just with our employees but also with their families.”

Harnath Babu, CIO, KPMG India, emphasizes that leader-employee engagement is crucial for organizational growth. “One of the biggest

lessons that we've learnt in last one year is that the leaders have to have constant communication with their employees to keep them motivated and connected. It's important for leaders to stay in constant touch, write blogs, and keep communicating on people talents and their efforts."

In fact, companies that foster a stronger culture of belonging are more likely to reap the benefits of improved performance. "Organisations that establish this kind of inclusive culture are twice as likely to meet or exceed financial targets, likely to be high-performing, likely to be innovative and agile, and more likely to achieve better business outcomes," Joshi says.

He further adds that when people see and appreciate how their individual contributions help to advance goals they support and find meaningful, they're more likely to be engaged, motivated and perform at a high level that impacts overall organisational performance.

Moreover, the independence given to the teams results in higher productivity and almost negligible errors, because every single person starts owning their role in the organization, adds Kumar.

Hence, the right structure should strike the balance



“One of the biggest lessons that we've learnt in last one year is that the leaders have to have constant communication with employees to keep them motivated and connected.”

HARNATH BABU, CIO, KPMG India

between empowerment and control, centralization, and delegation. Leaders can use the opportunity to question existing structures, rethink the effectiveness of operating models, and break down organizational silos and

barriers between teams.

Upskilling and investing in employees

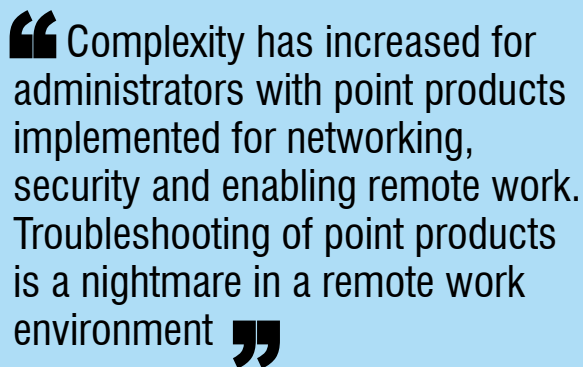
With the change in working environment and

skill requirements, we are seeing a tremendous uptick in investment in upskilling. Most of the jobs—even manual ones—will become more digitized, and will need to build stronger understanding of automation, analytics, and data. In short, every job in the coming decade will need to incorporate some sort of technology, and the best way for companies to do that is, by offering employees the training they need.

Amazon alone committed USD 700 million for upskilling its employees through 2025 to prepare them for a more digital workplace. The program seeks to impact more than 100,000 of its employees with a unique focus on helping its employees in lesser skilled role gain the skills to grow professionally. Amazon isn't alone in its effort to upskill its workforce. PwC is investing USD 3 billion.

In addition, several other large technology firms including Microsoft, Salesforce, IBM and Google have launched programs for upskilling both internal and external workforces.

"The best way to be prepared for this new world is to become agile and adapt at speed. It is also important to add skills which match us to the current technological landscape," shares Kumar.



According to a Capgemini survey, 70 percent of organizations said that the current Covid crisis will lead them to hire a more fluid workforce in the future, such as freelancers, or independent workers. Nearly 73 percent of executives say

Another element of talent planning in the new normal is not just finding employees with the right skills, but attracting them

However, a recent Capgemini research on 'data-powered' enterprises finds that only 37 percent of business users get access to data at the speed at which they need to make decisions. Moreover, 59 percent say that the organization's data access policies result in

In a remote setup, exchange of data and information are even more important for interdisciplinary cooperation. Hence, organizations are upping their remote work game to enable smooth exchange of data and information among the workforce. That includes an influx of investment in collaboration, software-defined networks (SD-Wan) and workspace tools that allow teammates to work together even though they're apart. "Companies are investing in workspace solutions offering virtual channels to access data and applications. These virtual channels can be managed, enabled and disabled remotely through single

console. Moreover, while accessing your resources you do not transfer the data outside data centre; it transfers mouse-click, keyboard strokes and screenshots. This enables users to get seamless and unified experience across the devices even in low bandwidth networks,” explains Shah.

He adds that AI and ML are taking the employee experience to the next level. “Applications like Twitter shows us the feed which is relevant to us based on AI/ML algorithms. While we organise the work having the application to extract content and notifications in one place, the AI/ML algorithms guide users with the fit cards it display on the front. It’s quite similar to how Twitter guides us with the face it shows,” details Shah.

“We are delivering enhanced employee

experience by offering over 18 different kinds of bots that are used by the employees for self service. Seamless servicing through bots for various day-to-day tasks offers the next level of experience to the employees,” adds Babu.

Further, with the explosion of remote work and cloud computing, adopting Zero Trust approach makes more sense. Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA) ensures that critical assets can only be reached by those offering proof positive that they have the credentials, identity, and need to access them. “The traditional VPN and perimeter security

models are not relevant in a remote environment. Hence, companies are looking at ZTNA solutions to secure critical assets. In fact, discerning customers are opting for unified solutions offering web gateway firewall, cloud access security, malware, DLP, sandboxing and so on into a single cloud-delivered solution,” adds Kelkar.

Despite the best of technology delivering seamless employee experience, it’s becoming clear that humans have a very clear limit as to how many online meetings they can sit through without suffering from stress and fatigue.

A recent Microsoft research has concluded that continuous video calls without breaks can reduce focus and even trigger stress. The study concluded that no breaks in between the meetings lead to a spike in stress levels. This spike is even more noticeable just when the participants shift from one meeting to another. On the contrary, short breaks between the meetings results in more relaxed and focused users.

Indeed, when it comes to talent acquisition and retention, the smartest companies are the ones that find ways to help limit those marathon video-conference meetings to a minimum while also finding meaningful ways for employees to connect and stay engaged.



TECHNOLOGY, CULTURE, CONNECT ARE CRUCIAL IN REMOTE WORK ENVIRONMENT

In an elaborate conversation, Dr Vishwanath Joshi, Chief People Officer, Hexaware Technologies, underlines the three-pronged approach that the organization is taking to drive employee productivity and morale in a remote work environment. Edited excerpts of the conversation



DR. VISHWANATH JOSHI,
Chief People Officer, Hexaware Technologies

■ **As many organizations have adopted remote working environment or a hybrid approach due to the ongoing pandemic, what are the challenges you see in terms of employee experience?**

It's been a testing time for many organisations including Hexaware and more importantly I would say it's been a test of leadership in these organisations. Based on our experience over the last 12 months, there are three areas of challenges: one is that people are going to get disconnected from the purpose

of the organization as they're working alone at home, distributed across the geography. Therefore, there is a risk that this lack of interaction and socialization may disconnect them from the purpose of the organization. We're already seeing that happening; in the last couple of months, we are seeing a lot of people moving jobs which is resulting in organizations losing talent.

The second challenge is that with the loss of talent organizations suffers a lot with the subsequent customer loss. The third challenge is not currently visible, however, if we don't take charge of the above challenges, I suspect that people will eventually settle down to doing the minimum in the organization. All the productivity enhancement gains that we achieved in 2020 will be lost as employees may resort to 9-5 kind of mindset where they will not be proactive in their approach. This will be dangerous for the entire organization as well as for the professionals.

Ultimately, if we're not prepared to deal with these challenges then there will be a mediocrity in performance and the culture of the organizations.

■ **What are the few measured steps you are taking at Hexaware to deal with these challenges?**

We are no different than other organisations as we are also facing the same challenges. However, we started off with few initiatives, which are giving positive results. Our top priority was to ensure employee health. Of course, the emphasis was to protect our business, assure our customers and to maintain the logistics, but the most important element was to ensure that our employees remain healthy, safe, engaged and motivated.

I remember my first address to my 20,000 employees was about the most crucial element to bind all the employees together: Trust. To build trust among the employees and within the organization, we established a series of information sharing channels. We established forums to share information in a very open and transparent manner. One such forum that we established is Leadership Lantern. Leadership Lantern literally means leaders who are with lantern showing the way that can actually help build that trust. We still continue with

this initiative after over 18 months.

The second thing was that we didn't want people to get disconnected from even the top leaders in the organization. So, we started a forum called Coffee-with-Keech; our CEO is fondly called Keech. Coffee-with-Keech became an amazing forum where a lot of ideas came in and we acted on those ideas and made some very significant changes in our ways of working.

Third, we thought about this pandemic and how it can have a significant negative impact on the mindset and psychology of the people. So, the best way to deal with this was to connect with the families of our employees. Through a series of well-designed fun events with underlying message of engagement, we connected with not just with our employees but also with their families.

Further, we ran an initiative called Work-from-Home Series, where people took photographs of their experiences working from home. They designed their home like office, decorated the desk and posted those pictures on social media where people commented and congratulated them, which actually gave new energy to the employees. So, social distancing should not lead to emotional distancing.

■ As productivity challenges may affect the overall business outcome what are your suggestions to measure and improve productivity in the remote work environment?

We don't have answers to all these things right now

but we're experimenting with a few things. There are three areas that we are working on. We are looking at how we connect employees through technology solutions so that people can continue to collaborate and work together from all areas, for example, we are looking at creating a connected and aligned performance management system. We have just invested in a very robust performance management system and promoting that because it will help us stay connected in the organization. We

communication forums. We actually formed small groups of people who we call Location Captains. These groups enable information sharing in the most remote locations where Hexaware employees work at different client's site.

To summarize, Hexaware is investing in three areas that can keep the productivity and the morale high. One is technology-based solutions to ease information sharing, second is culture of trust and transparency and third is to connect leadership through different forums.

“ My mantra is employee involvement and employee empowerment. The need is to get employee feedback and getting wiser by making them a part of the organizational journey. ”

also have a chat bot-based tool, which reaches out to employees and have a conversation. That chat bot directly works with me as CPO and represent me in reaching out to employees.

In addition, we are investing in culture to build employee value proposition. This is to ensure that despite the difficult time, employee learning and growth will not stop. I believe that investment in building a strong people-centric transparent culture is crucial in dealing with and improving the productivity.

Further, we are focusing on enhanced role of leadership in the organization and leadership that connects with the organization. So, last year we had 120 percent coverage of our employees globally in different

■ Can you please elaborate on your approach in implementing the performance management system?

We are working with SAP as our technology partners for performance management system. We just invested in SAP SuccessFactors software; we're calling it ACE software. A stands for aligned as the objective is to align the entire organization and make sure that there is single direction in which we are moving. C stands for continuous as we want the system to be continuous which means it's not going to be a traditional system where somebody opens the link and closes the link; there is an opportunity to give and receive feedback

wherever you are and at whatever time. The third one is making it employee-driven as we believe that employees are the owner of their careers in any organisation. In fact, Hexaware has a program called Own Your Game, which is a continuous message to employees saying 'you own your game at Hexaware.' So, we are collaborating with SAP to make sure that this system is implemented.

■ How can businesses gain insights and address concerns from employees in a hybrid environment?

We are focused on building an inclusive workplace in our organization, where people have a voice and that voice is brought to the table whenever we are making important business decisions. Over the last five years, we have been working with a consulting partner, Great Place to Work and we conduct empower survey every year. It is actually called employee power and it's an exhaustive survey that helps us understand on key parameters of what your employees are thinking and feeling. Last year, we did something interesting and took this data back to employees and involved them in the process of planning to act on that data. That exercise reflected in this year's survey, in which 68 percent of our employees told that we have become a listening organization. My mantra is employee involvement and employee empowerment. The need is to get employee feedback and getting wiser by making them a part of the organizational journey.

AI, AUTOMATION TO ACCELERATE SHIFT TOWARDS HYBRID CLOUD

Lata Singh, Director, Partner Ecosystem, IBM India and South Asia, highlights that AI and automation will be crucial in driving hybrid cloud as we move further into 2021. She also underlines IBM's efforts including the recent IBM Cloud Satellite to enable partners drive their customers seamlessly onto cloud

■ **Over the last 12 months, what are the changes you have observed in customer demand?**

Over the last 12 months, we have observed three major shifts in customer demand: emergence of the network economy, expansion of new business models for cost efficiency and agility and finally, the acceleration of digital ecosystem. Centred on these three shifts, we are seeing an increased demand for cloud, security, remote work technologies and BCP engagement.

While the cloud adoption increased immensely with remote working environment, the demand for cyber security spiralled due to aggressive cyber attacks. As per the recent Threat Intelligence Index by IBM Security, India was the second most attacked country in Asia Pacific, as it accounted for 7 percent of all the attacks observed in Asia in 2020.

As we move further into 2021, the need is to leverage AI to monitor, detect and contextualise dynamic behaviour and movement across hybrid cloud environment to verify the legitimacy or lack of a threat in an automated response.

Finally, Business Continuity Planning was always a key hallmark for most of our clients, but based on the 2020 learning,

LATA SINGH,

Director, Partner Ecosystem, IBM India and South Asia

organisations are embracing AI to get better insights to address market volatilities.

■ What is your approach towards embracing the new world in the post-covid era?

The year 2020 was about disruption, it was about overcoming challenges. It was about rapid adoption of technologies. However, 2021 is the thawing period; It's time for organisations, for people to go back to work, it's for organisations to scale. It's also time for organisations to apply our collective learning by keeping resiliency at the core, and also developing a robust hybrid cloud and AI strategy. But in addition to that, we are successfully leveraging Red Hat as a unique platform to address these challenges. Our hybrid cloud approach allows clients to connect the back office to the front office to modernise mission critical workloads to build cloud native apps and to securely deploy and manage data and applications and when we really look at this entire hybrid cloud AI strategy, we are getting to the level of platform economy and all of us know that our ecosystem by adopting hybrid cloud is working towards building a platform based offering. So we're looking at managed service providers, we're looking at cloud service providers, data centre service providers, and that can be one organisation delivering everything or it can be multiple organisations, but we're looking at how does the ecosystem that is very service driven ecosystem, embedded IBM technologies within their offering

■ Please talk about your recent achievements in terms of channel footprints.

We want to highlight few areas that saw the adoption. One is the entire hybrid cloud. The second was security. I would say these two were the big focus and then Big Data and AI. We also had our leading GSI's, like TCS, Infosys, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, and HCL who joined our hybrid cloud ecosystem, and our technical experts worked closely with these partners to co-create and co-innovate solutions. We also had our ecosystem of value-added distributors who understood the pivot that's happening in the marketplace and therefore have been focusing on building core capabilities not only as cloud aggregators and

“ We want to highlight few areas that saw the adoption. One is the entire hybrid cloud. The second was security. I would say these two were the big focus and then Big Data and AI. ”

working on the IBM Cloud, but also looking at how are they investing their resources to advise and engage the larger ecosystem around the security and data and AI platform as well. We also worked with Vodafone Idea limited to announce a hybrid cloud offering right based on open technology from IBM and Red Hat to serve nearly 300 million subscribers.

■ In 2021, what will be the technology adoption trends and

mode of adoption?

Our research does show that 25 percent of the workloads have moved to the cloud globally. So the opportunity is significant. The 5G is going to bring IoT to the forefront. The AI and automation are accelerating and simplifying the shift towards hybrid cloud.

■ What are your recent partner initiatives? Please talk about the revamped PartnerWorld2.0 and how is it benefiting smaller partners.

It's actually an overhaul of our entire partner program to bring more partners into our ecosystem. So we've defined it under three tracks: Build, Service and Sell. The

program focuses on building skills as it helps partners deliver projects and services to their customers. So under the build track, it's about building and selling software from an ISV perspective, it is adopting or embedding IBM technology in the solutions that they are building. In addition, the entire focus is on ensuring that our partners are aware of the offerings from IBM across technologies, and they're able to pivot to the needs of the clients and also look at their own growth path for

their organisations as they move forward.

■ How are you enabling smaller partners catering to SME customers to build and implement advance technologies like AI and hybrid cloud solutions?

So one thing that we did announce last year and you've heard about it is the \$1 billion investment that that we've talked about to help our partners provide the clients seamless and secure journey to the cloud. That means we put in motion significant investment through our program enhancements to drive our partner to leverage the investments we're putting into use by looking at the solution that they want to embed with our technology, or move to the IBM cloud.

The Red Hat marketplace, gives partners a one stop shop to sell their open shift certified software as well. With the industry cloud ecosystem, and with the recent announcement of our IBM Cloud satellite, we are encouraging our partners to grow their business with the IBM Cloud, for regulated industries, to be able to provide a secure cloud environment for them to deliver to the clients. So the overall investment is across our channel partners, not just the smaller channel partners, but every partner needs a different level of hand holding. In India, the team has co-developed a solution with LTI to help insurance agencies leverage social media reviews of businesses to help identify potential risks associated with ensuring those companies.

Aeris: The IoT Champ

Sameer Mahapatra, Country Manager and VP Sales, Aeris Communications explains his IoT based offerings from connected cars to healthcare and agritech solutions.



SAMEER MAHAPATRA,
Country Manager and VP Sales, Aeris Communications

■ What are your roles and responsibilities in Aeris?

My role has been to expand and run the business operations of Aeris which is an integrated IoT player focusing across industries but specializing in the automotive segment. I look after interest in the India and SAARC region. The team based out of India is responsible for business in the south-east Asia, Middle-East and in Africa as well.

■ What are the solutions and services in the Aeris portfolio in India?

From an Indian subcontinent perspective Aeris has specialised in automotive, IoT over the last 5 and half years. There is considerable interest generated and build in other areas like agriculture, Aeris health care and in insurance. We have two joint ventures one with Mitsubishi and Volkswagen both these have enabled them to roll out connected car programmes in the American sub-continent and now spreading also. So this is what the Aeris mobility platform does.

The heart of the connected car programme is running on Aeris IoT tech. When we launched in the Indian sub-continent the focus was very clear that for both commercial and passenger vehicles most of them have their origins outside India apart from Suzuki in India brings most of its tech knowledge from outside India. The connected vehicle opportunity in India is in 1. Aftermarket 2. In the three wheeler, four wheeler and two wheeler segment, that is when Aeris created the very robust Knowledge and tech platform which is the Aeris smart mobility suite for two wheels three wheels four wheels insurance, for BFSI. What our platform does it enable the insurer multiple stakeholders with real time accurate and timely information to take timely decision.

■ How is the connected car opportunity in the Indian market?

The joint venture that we have is currently for the American markets. The primary reason for

that is the effort of launching connected vehicle is only in that part of the world. So our relation with them is whenever they expand this variants globally it will come to India as well. In India the connected vehicle programme right now for auto OEM's its an after-market practice as nobody is developing anything in India which is at a factory fit level. From volumes perspective there is a large market of two and three wheel where we are working with hundreds of OEM's in production.

■ What are the different use cases in the auto insurance and other sectors?

We have seen health care industry undergoing a transformation of 5years in the last 1year. All of us are being affected in various ways. IoT has a very critical part to play. Some use cases that we found and brought to the market over the last 12 months. A remote temperature monitoring system became a large differentiator in the market place.

■ What are the use cases of the solutions you introduced for the healthcare and agritech sector?

Agritech has been a very prominent consumer of IoT for the last three years. One of partners by the name of Hello Tractor from Africa is ther for the last 3-4 years and very recently introduced them in India as our partners. Now what the solutions does is, the farmers today are not able to calculate acreage of the land they use higher

rented tractors now the owner of the tractors and the farmers are two different entities here. By using lot of basic IoT implementation we have made a in road the agriculture sector where the farmer and owner ecosystem to do better productivity, in farm and the payment mechanism. So that's something we have been doing successfully now.

■ How do you ensure security on the OT front due to which most IoT deployments fail?

As IoT becomes Omni present the rick of security continues to increase in

“ We have seen health care industry undergoing a transformation of 5years in the last 1year. All of us are being affected in various ways. IoT has a very critical part to play. ”

proportion. As the number of devices increases the number of loose ends or points of security risk also keeps going up. As far as Aries is concerned our implementations everywhere we have tried to be ahead of the curve by putting in the most secure network that keeps getting upgraded every 6 months basis. So state of the art security systems which we built for very high OEM's like Volkswagen and Mitsubishi which we will bring in our Indian ecosystem also. So from that perspective we have built a secure robust network.

■ What are the partnership models you follow and how do these work in India?

The way we are structured in India is we have a very robust go to market model which is based on two pillars one is direct selling as teams are present pan India. Second model is a partner model so BSNL is one partner so all the business that BSNL does the IoT partner for that is Aries. We also have host of channel partner who do business with us. From business acquiring perspective direct sales or the alliances and partnership model is very clearly defined and that's what is bringing business for us. The third

partnership that is important for us is the entire vendor ecosystem where we have a 24x7 platform multi lingual nok support from post-delivery to service and deployment. We have very strong partnership with Finish, American and Chinese companies where we bring in lot of these capabilities which are time tested with us for multiple use cases.

■ What has been the impact of the pandemic on your GTM model?

2020 has been a major dent in the programmes

of all companies especially in the automotive sector. The two and three wheeler investment was at a 200 to 400 % growth stage in India. That took a huge beating in starting 2020 March. 15% companies withdrew from the market. The rest 85% were in a stage where 2020 would have been an investment year for them. By the time 2021 started and lot the pandemic was subsiding a bit lot of these companies were heavily investing during the pandemic by creating tech support and process so they can sustain themselves. In the 1st quarter of this year we have seen a big rise in business and that has impacted our business as well in a positive way. The realisation of IoT and remote working and connected world has come very strongly in all companies.

■ How have you been looking at balancing between retaining existing customers and acquiring new customers?

The faith that the management had in India had definitely paid off, which means that all of us knew that the pandemic will be behind us one fine day. The management's decision from march 2020 to march 2021 to keep investing in India was a very visionary thing. We all know that across the globe downsizing happening, sever cost measures being taken. We kept the team together we did not do any major reaction like slashing the cost for the year. We reached out to customers through webinars, video discussions product demos. As this was so interesting the availability

SOLUTION SHOWCASE

and reach from the customers went up by 100%. If I look at the number of customers we acquired in the last 4 month was almost equal to 2019 when the pandemic was not there. We acquired 10 customers without even meeting them face to face once.

■ How did you ensure remote support and services to your customers?

We run critical operations for companies across industry from the state police machinery to ride sharing to disaster management in Uttarakhand so many use cases which are critical to business. Like a telco those teams are always out on the field. Our operations deployment team are from an essential services perspective are continuously present on field. That is one of the reasons I think Aries is a trusted partner sustained and got new business through these. We are always there for customer support.

■ How do you ensure conformance with multiple regulations across multiple geographies?

Regulations in India and across is an interesting and dynamic play. There are many variable in regulations, for IoT in automotive there is a regulation that drives the automotive industry itself. There are regulations that drives what a device can do. When you talk about the telematics or the insurance segment IRDA comes into play. So it's a very interesting and complex mesh out there.

■ What are the

challenges in IoT deployment in India and what role Aries is playing to develop the IoT market here?

In India we are the pioneers and very represented in government forums. There are multiple contribution from Aries in multiple panels. We are co-creating a lot of policies as they are dynamic. We have seen that the sophistication of the industry for IoT adoption. If the technological adoption of the enterprise regardless of its size is very high in various stream. If the company is digitally savvy then their efficiency from IoT is very high. Aries has been able to educate companies the need to have IoT as what IoT can do so that's where

“ We have seen that the sophistication of the industry for IoT adoption. If the technological adoption of the enterprise regardless of its size is very high in various stream. ”

we see pioneer companies like ours educated people and companies that what IoT can do for you.

■ How is IoT deployment emerging as an additional revenue generator and profit center for organizations?

One of the largest deals we have closed in India in the last 18 months has been done last month, it's a two wheeler organization their

entire focus was on how they can put variant in the market place which will earn them increment. They have successfully launched a variant which is a successful connective feature. So the organisation is looking at incremental value that they can give to the customer and make incremental revenue as well.

■ How are SMEs looking at IoT deployment?

We have seen large implementation happen in tier 2 tier 3 cities also. Ride sharing is a very classic use case which are driven by SME's. A ride sharing company which has may be 100 vehicles in the city which ferry people across the

city. Now these companies internally lease these vehicle to individual owners and these owners have to pay a sum based on the mileage struck on the vehicle. This is only possible if they have a business critical IoT platform.

What are the use cases of your Top 5 largest IoT deployments and what are their contributions to Aries topine?

70% of our new business comes from two wheeler.

Clearly the use cases are similar they don't change from one two wheeler OEM to another. Lot of these two wheeler OEMs have B2B client we have been able to work very closely with these two wheeler OEMs and completely educate them. The OEMs have no knowledge about how to pitch about their USPs so that's where our solutions comes into play. My team works with these OEMs and make it relevant for the OEMs for each of the use cases.

■ How has been your experience working with the government sector?

There is a sizeable investment that has happened by the government in the last 2-3 years. The digital infrastructure in the country has gone up by many folds and there has been serious investments and government is one of the largest spenders in this field. As far as Aries been concerned there has been direct interaction with the government in some of the use cases. But mainly we are in non-government deals. Many non-government B2B deals that we have done they have been provided us through government.

■ What would be your message for customers looking at IoT deployments?

My message for clients and customers and especially for SMEs the message is IoT is not an option anymore it's a must have now. We should be looking at implementing IoT in parts and start to reap the benefits.



Real Estate's Tech Touch

Akhil Gupta,
Founder & Chief Tech &
Product Officer, NoBroker
 explains how technology is
 being leveraged effectively to
 eliminate the broker menace.

■ What are the solutions and applications currently in the NoBroker portfolio?

NoBroker was launched 7 years back in March of 2014. Since our inception we have been able to leverage technology a lot to create multiple solutions for our customers. Customers wanted their rental agreements to be done online and so brought complete rental agreement online. It is automated so without moving out of your house you can see and manage the rental agreement.

Then there is the home services where people would move in so they need packers and movers, they need cleaning painting so all of that started. People had to pay rent so NoBroker pay started where more than 4 lakh users pay their rent.

Another innovation has been the NoBrokerhood

platform, it's an application for apartment society management. We have seen a massive growth and requirements coming from these societies and there we have leveraged technology a lot. Since the pandemic started there was a lockdown, what happens is when people move in and out we used to have a feature called biometry, where everybody who come into the society daily like the maids and cooks they had to put their finger on a biometric device and with that their attendance and entry used to happen. Now with COVID that touch was not allowed so we innovated a facial recognition on this app.

On the security perspective the security guards of the society had to take a tour move around the society to check if everything is in place, if anything is broken etc. For that we created the guard patrolling there they can start the app, the app keeps a track of the

path the guard is using and with their phone they can scan the security points and if they find any issue they can just note that in their phone

In the app we have added another innovation that is for group buying where every family in the society has the NoBrokerhood app and they order their groceries on the app a single delivery boy from Big Basket or Groffers comes with their orders so that people don't have to leave their houses and many delivery boys are not entering the society constantly. These are some of the innovation that we brought in the NoBrokerhood app.

■ How would facial recognition work for delivery boys or courier people who are not regular visitors to the societies?

When people are coming non-frequently of different people are coming, what we do at the gate is we

ask them and 1st take their photograph and two app are integrated one is true caller and other one is Arogya Setu or any app that has a QR code. Once someone is coming on the gate the guard takes a photograph and opens a QR code on the app and scans your QR code which have your verified details as no of the app work without verified details. So in this way we get their verified details and the database is automatically created. So next time when they come we can verify them using their phone numbers or the residents have given the pre-approval because they know you. In those cases we do not use facial recognition we use QR code and that provides the data to us.

■ How many such sensors are required in an average society?

In bigger societies where there are 700 to 1000 apartments there are two

inlet points or a maximum of three. These IoT smart sensors cost very minimal amount than what we pay for the water supply, for example a high end ultra-sonic sensor costs around 25-30 thousand rupees and this meter runs for years. So these are economically viable and this helps in saving 10 lakh rupees. So in that case it is very viable and useful from innovation purposes.

■ What can be the potential security loopholes in the application in admitting people inside the society?

We expect the delivery boy to enter all the apartments and then needs permission from each apartment. If the delivery boy is in a hurry and does not do that we provide multiple devices at the main gate and at every block level give a device to the security guard. Now this guy comes from the main gate and at the block gate the guard asks how many orders does that guy have and on the device of the block guard it shows where all the orders are and have the approval. So if there is no approval the delivery guy will not be allowed to enter the block and stopped at the main gate.

■ How will NoBroker really ensure elimination of brokers when sites like 99acres and others have not managed it?

We are a platform, we are not classified like other platforms who are operating for the 10-15 years. We

believe in connecting our customer on both the side. Not only to buy or sell, take on rent we connect you with everything that you need for real estate. So what happens you need a house you search on NoBroker, when you get the house you will need a rental agreement you will get that on NoBroker, you can get packers and movers on NoBroker. So you will get everything that is required to get a new house on NoBroker. So the idea is with NoBroker and NoBrokerhood application anything and everything that is needed for real estate is there in the platform. So with this idea the platform has been created.

“NoBrokerhood is close to ten thousand societies in India. Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Pune, Hyderabad, NCR region where we are operating along with Ahmedabad and Jaipur.”

■ How does NoBroker ensure working with the utility providers?

All of this comes within the NoBroker app and the beauty of this platform is we don't pass your lead to anybody, we believe in serving you if it's a packer and mover I will tell you how much you need to pay, I will not connect you with ABC packers and movers and say I will take my 500 rupees and please deal with that particular guy. I get your move from Mumbai to Delhi done anything that

happens anything you want you reach out to me. So all of it happens on NoBroker, it's a brand it gives trust with NoBroker you will get that institutional feeling that is missing in the real estate industry.

■ What is the operational business model of NoBroker?

The society installs the app NoBrokerhood, on the app it's the resident who uses that particular app. Now if you need it in your app then you will purchase it. The society does not purchase they take the smart water meter, smart gate all those things. It is not a mandate you can come out

Ahmedabad and Jaipur.

■ What are NoBroker's expansion plans in the future?

We are growing now and our idea is to be in the top 25-30 cities in the next two to three years.

■ Are the solutions facing any connectivity/bandwidth problem?

India is one of the fastest growing countries in terms of telecom internet. Even in the tier 2 and tier 3 cities there are fibre connections available with 4G. When we started 2G and 3G were the primary network and our apps used to work on 2G and 3G also. Now with 4G we are hoping to have 5G in the next 12 months also. So by the time we reach out to tier 2, 3, 4 cities we will have any issues with internet.

Did the pandemic impact real estate purchasing which in turn affected NoBroker?

People thought that because everything was under lockdown house purchasing was not happening and people were not moving. During lockdown as well we are way ahead of our last year's numbers. People are looking to buying houses and the primary reason is everything is from home now, so that is increasing the demand for bigger houses. As the economy was under a stress builders were also offering deals, so people who did not have the cash flow problems started buying house, the home loan rates are lowest

at this time that I recall in the last 20 years. This has created an opportunity for people who have aspiration to buy new houses. There has been a demand for houses obviously it is not at the peak where it has been, but there is a lot more movement in the market in terms of much more buying than renting.

■ Will NoBroker solution work with b2b use cases like offices, business parks among others?

The NoBrokerhood application can be used by any commercial offices also, even in malls we have built it and we are making it much more advance that is needed for a mall or an office. But still there are offices who are using the application so that is in use already.

■ What are the new applications or use cases planned for NoBroker?

Many features that we built there are companies outside NoBroker that can provide those. So we keep on adding feature, rent payment is something that we added 18 months back. NoBrokerhood is another application, NoBroker home services which helps in cleaning, painting, moving home loans so that's another thing. Six years back there was only NoBroker rental but as of now we have four pillars now NoBroker, NoBrokerhood, NoBroker home services and NoBrokerpay.

■ How do you intend to support your expansion plans?

The way we have created our technology that we are extremely flexible. The whole of the NoBroker business model is guided by technology, so if I had to open in 50 cities in India I can do it tomorrow without even moving anywhere. We have a single office in India in Bangalore and representing around 10 cities around India. As traffic increases our system automatically scales up and if traffic decreases as what happened during COVID our system automatically scales down.

■ Does NoBroker work in collaboration with the agents?

We don't work with

what happens is technology like AI-ML, facial recognition that creates a unique opportunity and creates solutions for the problems that existed for years. Nobody wants to give a bad experience to their customer and for that they want high ability their websites and app. The need of an app that doesn't need to be frequently updated. So it's all about customer experience and cloud is gaining a lot of popularity.

■ What happens to the data especially with third party providers?

We don't sell our customer data and that is

“ We don't work with real estate agents, we have just the technology the app which is directly connecting buyer, tenant, owner, seller, society and their residents, we don't associate with agents for any of our services. ”

real estate agents, we have just the technology the app which is directly connecting buyer, tenant, owner, seller, society and their residents, we don't associate with agents for any of our services.

■ How did technology help the real estate sector during the pandemic?

It's not only technology but how you make use of the data. There's a lot of data that NoBroker generates a lot of propriety data which in India only NoBroker has. So

the primary privacy policy we have. We do analytics we help our customers find houses faster, find our services faster, finding houses at the best price, what should be the right rent they should be paying, so there's no way anyone can partner with NoBroker and get this data and we don't intend to do it at any point of time in the future also.

■ How do you ensure privacy of this sensitive data internally?

We don't give access to anybody to the data sites like people developers support teams, nobody needs to know and get access to the data bases where the data is stored. Even when any relation managers call you they don't get to see you data, so the way the technology is created there is a dashboard there he sees your name and clicks that and the call is connected. So we have built tools and taken all the precautionary measure so that our data is secured.

■ How does the NoBroker app support multiple regional local languages?

So NoBrokerhood has two parts one is the resident app and the other is the one which the guard uses. As guards are multilingual so our guard app is available in ten languages, just with a click of button you can change the language and use the app. Hindi, English, Kanada, Tamil, Telegue, Gujarati, Bengali, and Punjabi also is added, so we have total of 8-10 language's in the app.

■ What is NoBroker's workforce and what are they involved in?

We believe technology does a lot of work so for a company of our scale in India there should be eight to ten thousand employees, we work leanly so we have around 100 people in our technology product quality assurance team and on the operations side including NoBrokerhood we have another 200-2000 employees. So around 2000 to 2200 employees we have currently.

Personalization and Customer Focus Are CMS USPs

Anurag Mehrotra, CEO, CMS IT Services outlines his successes notwithstanding the large Tier-1 IT service providers.



ANURAG MEHROTRA, CEO, CMS IT Services

■ What are the solutions and services offered by CMS IT Services in managed services and as a system integrator?

CMS IT is a system integrator primarily focused in the domestic market. We set up the IT infrastructure for our customers, design it, implement it and roll it out, then sustain it for a period of time.

We are a system integrator and being a part of it, we provide system integration services, break fix services and managed IT services. The genesis of why I have joined CMS and reach where we are now is primarily because in the last 7-8 years all tier one companies have revisited their India strategy and de-focused for the domestic market and tier 2 has vanished.

When I joined CMS in 2013, we were only working on break fix but now we are a full-fledged system integrator.

■ Why have the Indian IT services players defocused from India while the global MNCs focus more on India?

The tier 2 companies vanished and the tier 1 companies revisited their strategies for many reasons. Second point is the Indian MNCs have de-focused from India and the global MNC's are focusing in India, the reason being for Indian IT companies, the global market is far more lucrative and all Indian companies in 2008, 2009, 2010 bid for government projects and ran into

huge outstanding and that really forced them to revisit their strategies.

For the global IT companies, their main focus is on the products.

What makes CMS stick in the market is that our value proposition is very simple, we have an execution capability of a large company. We are also able to personalize our services to our customers.

■ What are CMS' horizontal execution capabilities for your system integration offerings?

Looking at the key technologies, one is the ability to setup a data center for our customers which necessary calls for system integration of various pieces of technology. We have executed three products in terms of executing a private cloud for our customer. That's what we provide as all large enterprise will not accept public cloud for their key applications. Every enterprise is looking forward to having a hybrid model private cloud so there we are a very active player for our customers.

In terms of security, for a large customer we implemented 17 solution for security. So these are the areas we are working with our customers.

■ Which are the key verticals where the system integration business sees

maximum traction?

Our business is primarily horizontal because we are setting up infrastructure for our customers. BFSI is a big vertical for us, utilities is a vertical for us, FMCG is a vertical and manufacturing is also a vertical but we don't really measure our revenue in multiple terms, we measure that in the horizontal services we do which of the areas we play around our customers.

sure we can execute our project and pick up our money, only there we work.

■ How did the personalization and relationship aspect with customers help you during the pandemic?

The customer needs to be comfortable dealing with the service provider, personalization at a large

of this pandemic will be the customers. They will become more comfortable with remote services, so hope this pandemic has delivered this message to the customer that this onsite model is not a sustainable model. This will be a gradual change.

■ How can a mid-size company like CMS manage the challenge of linear growth?

We are hoping that as we move into the future, people will be a lot more open to non-linearity in their services by going more and more remote. So, it will be a challenge and not something that can be overcome over-night.

■ How were the existing SLAs impacted during the pandemic?

At the time of the lockdown there was a SLA holiday but now the customers are back to being normal and to the extent being a little unreasonable. There are customers who understand that this is an issue and we are working towards a solution and then there are customers who are unreasonable and they don't care, now fortunately most of our customers are being reasonable so it's a solution that you try to find as the situation develops.

The next quarter is not going to be easy as cases are spiking now and it will take time to sub size.

“We are hoping that as we move into the future, people will be a lot more open to non-linearity in their services by going more and more remote. So, it will be a challenge and not something that can be overcome over-night.”

■ How does CMS look at exposure to government projects?

We have a very limited presence in the government space and as far as government is concern we break it up into two one is PSU's and second in purely government entities and government organizations.

Our play here is very limited. We have a very simple principal that is unless and until we have a relationship with our customer before the tender and the customer knows us or we know them we don't engage with the government. Where we are

extent is giving comfort to the customer that the service provider is with them all the time.

During the pandemic, the same challenge was there so we were able to fulfill that as we have that flexibility in terms of how we operate. But more importantly, the flexibility that the customer saw was a massive effort that CMS IT made to move lot of onsite services and deliver it remotely.

The pandemic became an opportunity for us to deepen our relation with the customer. Secondly, the long lasting impact

■ How did the CMS sales and marketing engine manage to transform themselves digitally and balance between existing customers and acquiring new customers?

As an organization, one thing that we did very well was our outreach to our prospects and to our customers through digital medium. This lock down became a good time for us to reach to more and more prospects and make our impact.

Secondly, while the outreach was there it has not lead to too many closures because the customer business has also impacted. Thirdly, our focus is now to sell to more and more to our existing customer as their relationship is in place.

■ What was the problem of closures not matching digital outreach for CMS?

We didn't have too many closure out of the digital outreach. Otherwise we did business and under the circumstances we did reasonably good business.

■ How were the CMS internal workforce aligned digitally?

We did a lot of work to align digitally for example the digital outreach we did. Now outreach is one part next is how we track that outreach. So we used the lockdown to implement a

robust CRM system so that all customer interaction opportunities are there available in CRM. Now this has become the primary platform for engagement with our customers.

■ What will be their typical use cases for the top clients?

One is implementing private cloud, defensible cyber security, that's a big area we play with.

Second is automation and manage services is a

we implement a frame work which is, customer specific. We have a frame work that tackles all this and we have implemented this.

■ How much your workforce is managed from smaller cities and how are you geographically spread?

We are geographically spread because the services we offer to our customers have to be pan India as we have customers from all

“We did a lot of work to align digitally for example the digital outreach we did. Now outreach is one part next is how we track that outreach. So we used the lockdown to implement a robust CRM system so that all customer interaction opportunities are there available in CRM.”

concern which has fueled our growth and we are a leader in the market.

■ Can you elaborate on some of the aspects of the automation framework?

This automation has two or three elements to it. One is proactive support; second is once the problem occurs how it can be solved quickly by using bots, AI and so on. Third is how do

across India. Take any BFSI customer they are present in every nook and cranny of the country. One of our value proposition is we provide pan India support. Being present pan India has its challenges like spreading your infrastructure across but we are managing it and we have been successful.

■ How differently CMS is doing things from Tier 1 service providers and

what are the main milestones planned in the next 1-2 quarters?

We have managed to be a customer focused organization.

A large company as it grows, it becomes more inward looking as your own process are more important than what you need to do for our customers. As CMS is a small company, it is easy to make it more customer focused and that is what we have managed to do.

The primary goals for the next two to three quarters they are very simple, how to deepen our relation with existing customers and do more for them. Secondly, moving to cloud.

■ How would you meet the regulatory challenges coming in multiple verticals?

It's a challenge. Since it's a compliance issue, you have to do it there are no other options.

■ What would be your message for the CIOs of enterprises for the next one year?

One is to look at more and more remote services as compared to an onsite model and second is to have quality of service as that will be important as we move forward.

These are the two areas which will need a lot of focus and retention, organization will have to be conscious about this things and the other is movement to cloud.

ASIRT REQUESTS MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT TO RESTRICT E-COMMERCE PLAYERS SELLING IT GOODS

Association of Systems Integrators and Retailers in Technology (ASIRT) has requested to the Maharashtra Government to restrict online stores and e-commerce platforms to sell IT goods to non-essential customers in the state.

While the government of Maharashtra imposed restrictions and lockdown

starting April 4, 2021, it included IT services in the essential services list on the request and representation from ASIRT.

In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackrey, the association of system integrators and retailers highlighted that few of the online stores and e-commerce platforms including Amazon are

delivering IT goods in contravention to the notification and guidelines issued by the Government of Maharashtra.

“Our member and IT suppliers across Maharashtra are refraining from selling or servicing non-essential customers. But if online stores and ecommerce platforms starts selling to non-essential customers, it hurts the interest of the citizens. It may lead to a situation where even these IT vendors will be forced to sell to non-essential customers. Which in turn will defeat the purpose of lockdown,” said

Tushar Parekh, Chairman, ASIRT.

He further added that the government’s fight against Covid-19 will be compromised as more people will go out to deliver and more people will be exposed to Covid-19 infection.

While praising the government’s swift steps, the letter from the association appreciated government’s measures to curb the Covid-19 pandemic’s second wave, which are bearing results with reducing positivity rate and daily cases.



TUSHAR PAREKH, Chairman, ASIRT

“Our member and IT suppliers across Maharashtra are refraining from selling or servicing non-essential customers. But if online stores and ecommerce platforms starts selling to non-essential customers, it hurts the interest of the citizens. It may lead to a situation where even these IT vendors will be forced to sell to non-essential customers. Which in turn will defeat the purpose of lockdown.”

HCL Technologies and IBM Collaborate to Modernize Security Operations

HCL CyberSecurity Fusion Centers to Leverage IBM Cloud Pak for Security for Unified Threat Management

IBM Security announced it has collaborated with HCL Technologies (HCL) to help unify and streamline threat management for clients via a modernized security operation center (SOC) platform. HCL's Cybersecurity Fusion Centers will be designed to take advantage of IBM's Cloud Pak for Security, to help create a unified security platform to connect security teams, tools and processes across the threat lifecycle. This collaboration builds on HCL and IBM's recent alliance expansion to help organizations with digital transformation.

HCL's Cybersecurity Fusion Centers deliver threat management services to clients around the world through six global state-of-the-art security operations and response facilities. IBM's Cloud Pak for Security will serve as the foundation to connect security tools, data and workflows with HCL customers. Cloud Pak for Security is an open, containerized software platform which allows companies to quickly integrate a wide range of security data, tools and clouds for deeper insights into threats across hybrid cloud environments.

"Enterprises operating in today's fast-moving digital world need a cybersecurity strategy capable of tackling increasingly sophisticated threats. Collaboration is key in the cybersecurity industry to build and implement the solutions to stay one step ahead. This collaboration enables us to enhance the service that we provide to our clients and to combine the threat detection and response technologies with the development of technological



JUSTIN YOUNGBLOOD
Vice President, IBM Security

processes and the experience of our professionals across all areas of cybersecurity" said Maninder Singh, Corporate Vice President, Cyber Security Services at HCL Technologies.

"Many companies today are struggling with the complexity of security operations amidst cloud adoption and fragmented IT infrastructure, which can hamper their ability to discover and respond to threats," said Justin Youngblood, Vice President, IBM Security. "Modern security demands an open platform that leverages AI and automation to help security operations teams connect disparate tools, provide insights and orchestrate response across hybrid cloud environments. With this collaboration, HCL and IBM are modernizing security operations and helping clients accelerate their security outcomes."

HCL is part of IBM's Hybrid Cloud Ecosystem, an initiative to support partners of all types — whether they build on, service or resell IBM technologies and platforms — to help clients manage and modernize workloads with Red Hat OpenShift for any cloud environment, including the IBM public cloud. Red Hat OpenShift is the industry's leading enterprise Kubernetes platform. The IBM public cloud is one of the industry's most secure and open public clouds for business. With its security leadership, enterprise-grade strength and support for open source technologies, the IBM public cloud is designed to differentiate and extend on hybrid cloud workloads for enterprise workloads.



MANINDER SINGH
Corporate Vice President, Cyber Security Services, HCL Technologies

Ingram Micro expands Advanced Solutions portfolio, signs distribution agreement with A10 Networks

Ingram Micro India has announced their distribution agreement with A10 Networks, a leading provider of secure application services for on-premises, cloud and edge-cloud environments. A10 Networks serves customers in 117 countries, enabling service providers and enterprises to deliver business-critical applications that are secure, available and efficient for multi-cloud transformation and 5G readiness.

Organizations face unprecedented challenges due to the proliferation of sophisticated cyber-attacks. Accelerated digital transformation on the back of the pandemic and an increased dependency on digital tools due to remote working have compelled enterprises to rethink their strategy around network and application security. A10 Networks' integrated solution delivers better business outcomes that support investment protection, new business models and help future-proof infrastructures.

Commenting to the partnership, Navdeep Narula, Executive Director, Mobility & Compute, Ingram Micro India said, "We are excited to work with A10 Networks to distribute their broad range of market-leading application network and security solutions. Solutions such as the Thunder Convergent Firewall, TLS/SSL



NAVDEEP NARULA
Executive Director, Mobility & Compute, Ingram Micro India



SANJAI GANGADHARAN
Regional Director, SAARC, A10 Networks

visibility, DDoS detection & mitigation and application delivery complement our existing cybersecurity portfolio and will help our partners and customers mitigate the growing threat of sophisticated cyber security attacks that threaten network security and availability."

"The pandemic has had a significant impact on cyber security, as the country witnessed a tremendous upsurge in cyber-attacks and data breaches. Many businesses ramped up their digital initiatives to keep up with the rapid pace of innovation and maintain business continuity. We are looking forward to working with Ingram Micro as our prime distributor in India. With this relationship, we aim to elevate our customers' network security strategies to help them deliver business-critical applications that are secure, available, and efficient for multi-cloud transformation and 5G readiness," said Mr. Sanjai Gangadharan, Regional Director, SAARC, A10 Networks.

He added, "We are confident that Ingram Micro with its strong vendor relationships, deep learning, sales, marketing and technology expertise will be a valuable addition to our business."

Trend Micro appoints Vijendra Katiyar as Country Manager, India & SAARC

Trend Micro, the leader in cybersecurity, has announced the appointment of Vijendra Katiyar as the Country Manager for India & SAARC. The appointment is with immediate effect.

Based in Mumbai, Vijendra Katiyar will be leading Trend Micro's India and SAARC operations, focusing on steering customer and business growth and increasing the company's overall market share across India. His remit will also include strengthening engagement with channel partners to help deepen customer engagement and success.

His experience spans diverse portfolios ranging from sales and thought leadership in cybersecurity to technical consulting across industries. Under his well-versed leadership skills, Trend Micro India's existing customers will continue to receive the same level of service and commitment they have come to expect from Trend Micro.

Vijendra has had a long and successful journey with Trend Micro. In his nine-year stint at the company that began in 2012, he held different positions, from Regional Account Manager to National Sales Manager – India & SAARC and led the mandate of growing the cloud security business for Trend Micro. Before his new role, he served as the Director – Enterprise Business, India

& SAARC. He has driven strategic business decisions with effective tools and processes, translating to 100% revenue growth in the last four years.

Commenting on the appointment, Nilesh Jain, Vice President, Southeast Asia and India, Trend Micro, said, "India is an important strategic market for us, and we are excited for Vijendra to take on this new leadership role. His proven capability of leading high-performance teams, astute business acumen, and deep expertise in cybersecurity is extremely valued, particularly as customers look to Trend Micro to help them navigate through newer and more advanced cyber threats during these challenging times. With cybersecurity continuously evolving and becoming more complex, our offerings to customers have never been more integral in ensuring business continuity with faster and better-automated protection catering to all workloads."

Speaking about his new role, Vijendra Katiyar, Country Manager, India & SAARC, Trend Micro said, "We have experienced significant growth in the past year, and I look forward to build on this momentum to lead Trend Micro through the next phase of growth. With strong tailwinds supporting our business and growth levers in place, I'm confident that we are well placed to meet the demands and challenges in cyber security and helping enterprises in securing their digital transformation journey. I look forward to work more closely with our customers, channel partners and other key stakeholders to build stronger collaborations, build synergies and scale business."

Vijendra holds a master's degree in business IT from RMIT University, Australia and is a BE graduate in electronics and telecommunication from Bharati Vidyapeeth University. He has also successfully pursued team leadership program at Indian School of Business, Hyderabad among many others.



VIJENDRA KATIYAR
Country Manager, India & SAARC
Trend Micro

Vertiv Partners with Radiant for it's KVM and PDUs Range of Products

The partnership empowers Radiant Info Solutions to deliver Vertiv range of products through its robust distribution network spread across India.



Radiant Info Solutions has been appointed as an extended arm for North India to distribute Vertiv's range of Smart Power Distribution Units (PDUs) & KVM switches.

Radiant will ensure consistent product availability and effective service support to partners and end-users through its strong presence in all major cities with a robust distribution network spread across India.

Commenting on the collaboration, Nishant Gupta, Director Sales & Technology at Radiant said, "We are excited to collaborate with Vertiv in it's expanding domain of KVM switches & PDUs. Vertiv is a renowned brand with an innovative and cutting-edge product portfolio. We through our wide reach and a robust network of hundreds of partners will ensure seamless availability of Vertiv products to the ever-growing market."

Talking about the go-to-market plan, Nishant Gupta said, "We will focus on the channel and SI partners and provide end-to-end support for the demonstration. We will also leverage our social media presence to increase

brand visibility and update partners and end customers on new product additions and schemes."

Commenting on the future plans Nishant Gupta said "As Business infrastructure continues to evolve the power connectivity, we want to make sure that we offer the best-in-class solutions to end-users. As the IT sector in India is growing exponentially, we want to target this high potential booming market.

"The partnership between Vertiv and Radiant would further reinforce and enlarge our outreach in India", Nishant Gupta added



NISHANT GUPTA
Director Sales & Technology,
Radiant

Channel Point



Future of Work

The fully remote model that we have seen in recent months has delivered mixed results. While it has brought tangible advantages – from a better work-life balance for certain groups of employees to productivity gains for some organizations – we also found it has its limitations. This points to a future built on a hybrid model, which strikes a balance between work-from-home and office models, and which aims to differentiate the company and build its employee proposition.

This will mean that organizations will need to find the right operating model for a hybrid approach. This is not the same as imposing a virtual layer over the existing organization. Organizations need to realize that this new hybrid way is not a case of necessarily repeating what they used to do in the physical workplace sense. Companies that thrive in this environment will be those that see it as an opportunity to work, lead, and organize differently. It will impact the way leaders think and lead, the way work is conducted, and existing processes and team structures.

Before leaders settle on one operating model, they need to test and iterate to determine the right fit for various functions. The right structure should strike the balance between empowerment and control, centralization, and delegation, and the number of desired levels in the organization. Leaders can use the opportunity to question existing structures, rethink the effectiveness of operating models, and break down organizational silos and barriers between teams. According to a Capgemini survey, 70% of organizations said that the current COVID crisis will lead them to hire a more fluid workforce in the future, such as freelancers, or independent workers. Nearly 73% of executives say that they have started to hire from locations in different time zones.

Further, a robust digital infrastructure is key to rapidly shifting to a remote working model and maintaining business continuity. IT teams need to pivot quickly towards adopting a digital infrastructure that offers resilience, agility, and scalability at its core. Organizations need to not only invest in the best possible data management and analysis tools, but also make targeted investments in their employees and their expertise in using these tools.

The World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report 2020 says that 84% of companies have accelerated the digitalization of work processes. Providing employees with adequate tools, technologies, and a robust data infrastructure is key to adapting to a hybrid operating model.

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