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2022

& beyond

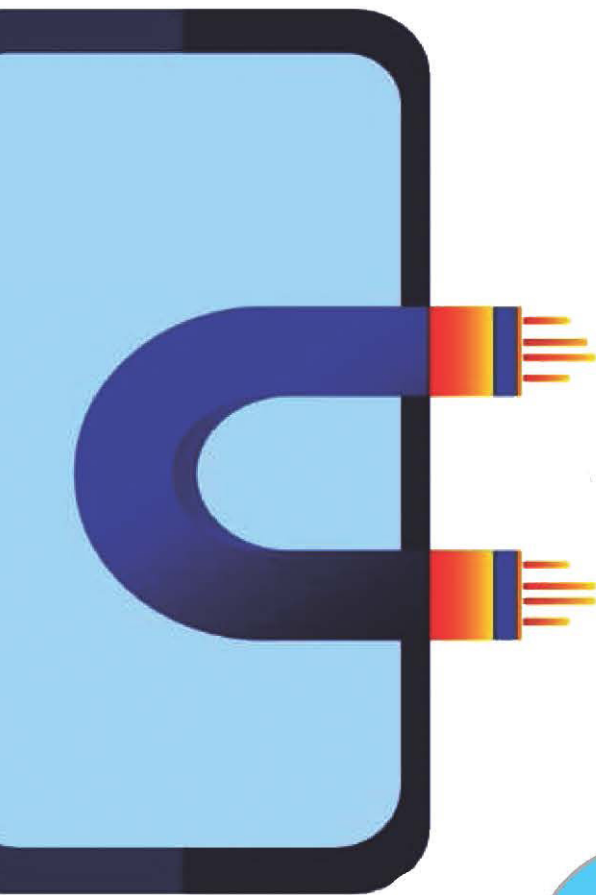
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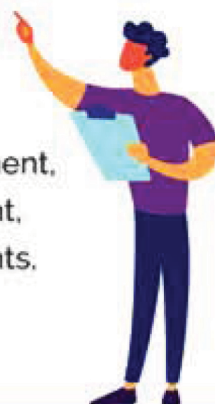


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JULY - AUGUST 2022

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EDITORIAL

JULY - AUGUST 2022

2022: Year of Technology & Resilience

Life appeared to be in a rush at the start of 2022. Now people want to get everything done as soon as possible. They want to make up for the losses they've suffered over the last two years in a few months. And technology is proving to be a great enabler in accelerating the pace of growth and achieving maximum outcomes.

In this phase, every technology is undergoing a significant advancement. Organisations are modernising everything from computing to storage and backup to applications and security. But at the same time, skilled professionals are in short supply across all technologies. As a result, staff turnover is at an all-time high right now. IT leaders now have complete autonomy, beginning with experimenting with existing technology.

Furthermore, AI and machine learning are being widely adopted this year. AI feels like it was everywhere already, but 2022 is seeing that presence grow multi-fold. And we should all be fine with the increased role AI will play as it will continue to act as a technological innovator for the foreseeable future. The Internet of Things (IoT) is being increasingly used in manufacturing. RPA and automation are two other technologies that are being employed more extensively.

Keeping all these industry-changing technologies in mind Elets Technomedia with Elets CIO is hosting an in-person event named "Digital Transformation Conclave 2022" in Mumbai at ITC Maratha on 22nd July 2022, and I'd like to invite you all to join us there.

Leadership Vision: CIO Priorities in 2022 is the cover story for this issue, which focuses on the vision of tech leaders for 2022 and beyond. This article looks at how the role of CIOs is changing across industries and what the future holds. We also have industry perspectives shared by prominent leaders in the business.

Our most recent issue, which has such a diverse range of conversations and viewpoints, will be a fascinating read for all of you.

Cheers!



Dr Ravi Gupta

Editor-in-Chief

The Banking & Finance Post

Magazine and Founder, Publisher

and CEO, Elets Technomedia Pvt Ltd



Leadership Vision: CIO PRIORITIES IN 2022 & BEYOND

CIOs continue to play a crucial role in enabling targeted business objectives by driving digital transformation across the organisation. The new role of the CIO is to equip and enable others to establish digital skills, channels, and solutions that drive revenue growth, save money, and reduce risk. To deliver economic value within their organisation, the CIO will require a clear leadership vision, while also having their priorities in line, owing to the explosion of digital technology innovation, understanding buyer behaviour, and the complexity of new business models. In 2022, CIOs will play a vital role in driving digital transformation. The CIO can be the catalyst for others to efficiently build up IT capabilities through talent; improve communication channels between C-suites to better serve their role and ensure improved cyber security to minimise the risks. Based on exclusive interactions with leaders, **Nidhi Shail Kujur** of **Elets News Network (ENN)** explores the dynamically changing role of CIOs across industries and the way forward.

PRIORITIES AND TECHNOLOGIES THAT WILL DRIVE 2022

The demand for digitalisation is at an all-time high, Thanks to organisations going online and switching to cloud storage. Shobhana Lele, CIO, Bombay Dyeing, says, "Cloud computing will be at the forefront and there will be keen interest in RPA, AI/ML. Agile technologies will continue to drive fast and innovative solutions. Cybersecurity tools will run horizontally across all initiatives. Lastly, greener technologies will start laying the foundation for the future."

Post-Covid, IT leaders are accelerating their speed, and are also likely to explore tech-based innovations and vistas in 2022. Subhakar Rudra, CIO, WPIL Limited comments on this, "Cloud, Data Analytics and Intelligence and SDWAN to start with, while Information Security Tech exploration would run in parallel."

The pace of activity has been slower in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but things started to normalise in 2022, which can be an opportunity for organisations to go full steam ahead. Anil Aggarwal, MD & CEO, Shriram General Insurance says "The focus is on extensive data capturing and building analytical models for our underwriting and pricing processes. This will not just help in reaching more customers but also allow us to better our claims assessment, customer service, personalisation and customisation of products and services, and fraud detection"

He also adds, "Shriram General Insurance aims to provide the best customer experience, driven by technological improvements in service and processing times. That is a driver of profit through increased customer retention."

Manish Thakkar, chief operating officer, Avanti Finance comments on this, "Like, I mentioned, we have grown during the covid pandemic, and we tend to continue that performance. We aim at expanding our progress by almost two to three times what we are today. And the target that we have set per se, we are growing our partners, today, we work with close to 45 plus partners and we want to double it. But we will deepen our relationship with the partners and grow each of the partners in terms of the quantum of lending that we do. Our focus for 2022 is to leverage technology and to create not a linear kind of growth but more of an exponential kind of growth at later stages. So, for 2022, we are focusing on being three times what we are today. And of course, we are targeting EPT raising during 2022 to help us manage that growth and execute various bank partnerships, from the capital



perspective. So that's broadly the kind of plan that we have from 2022."

Summing up the Demand and Expectations for 2022, Rajeev Chaba – President & Managing Director, MG Motor India states, "In retrospection – the beginning of the financial year 2021-22, gradually started to show the positive effect of the phased unlocking of the economy post lockdown. This brought a significant increase in enquiries and bookings. The recently launched Astor, along with Hector, ZS EV and Gloster, continue to attract strong customer interest and remain the vehicle of choice for the customers in their respective segments. We are seeing signs of positive consumer sentiment due to pent-up demand and expect the demand to increase with the turn of the year. We have witnessed a year-to-date growth of 56% with retail of 37,723 units (Jan-Nov '21) over 24,152 units sold in the same period last year"

The product development process has undergone substantial modifications because of Industry 4.0 that has established a framework for building connected devices, and the Internet of Things (IoT) is proving to be a game changer as a communication channel for digital twins. On this Shirin Hameed, chief marketing officer (CMO), Detroit Engineered Products (DEP) adds, "Digital twins is in an exciting space right now. With the increasing developments in the world of IoT, the volume and complexity of data that can be captured is increasing exponentially, and the software's capability to handle, analyse and manipulate that data is struggling to keep up. With additional software and data analytics, digital twins can often optimise systems or processes designed to detect, prevent, predict, and optimise through real time analytics to deliver business

value. A digital twin can be extremely useful along the entire product cycle of a product, right from design to deployment, to its end. A digital twin can be a model of a component, a system of components, or a system of systems – such as pumps, engines, power plants, manufacturing lines, or a fleet of vehicles. It can even be the model of a process, which needs that level of analysis and real time feedback. Nearly all industries are looking at adopting digital twins as a technology in some form or the other"

CHALLENGES FOR TECH LEADERS TO TACKLE IN 2022

The list of difficult and recurring concerns IT leaders must tackle this year includes facilitating hybrid working arrangements and ensuring a skills match for future success. Finding and retaining top people, enhancing security, and developing comfortable and robust remote work environments are all challenges that IT administrators will confront in 2022. However, the current pandemic has exacerbated these issues.

The Great Resignation has increased the skills gap. Previously, a business objective, support for distributed teams is now a need. Securing employees' own mobile devices and other remote work equipment has become more important as the quantity of these devices has increased as offices have emptied. Vineet Tyagi, Global CTO, Biz2X says, "With the on-going pandemic, industries across the globe have been primarily dominated by the challenges of digital transformation. Drastic bumps in firms of swapping systems to digital platforms, working remotely, and devising user-friendly products and services that retained customers during the lockdowns seem to now calm down. FinTech

companies specifically have seen a boom. The support of the government and government bodies like NITI Aayog has been critical behind this boom. The disruptions that we have witnessed so far in Fintech are just the beginning. We are being ushered into an era of contactless payments, discount broking, minimum fee-based wealth management models, and super-fast delivery of insurance products, etc.”

The year 2022 will be better known as the year of the “Fintech Revolution.” The three major reasons behind the same will be –

- Shifting to cashless payment via UPI and adding it to GDP.
- Extended government support through policy that would create a sense of recognition for regulators and compliance for fintech-driven models.
- Increase in the technology awareness among the small businesses which will lead to seamless user experience and better fintech products.

“These disruptions are significant, however, there’s much more to follow in the coming years. Recently our honourable PM Modi inaugurated a leadership Forum on Financial Technology (FinTech) and urged the adoption of modern-day technologies like AI, ML, Blockchain, and data-driven micro-lending in the fintech sector. Another key advancement that will surely grab attention will be open banking. India is at the cusp of operationalising its own open banking framework. Open Banking is the practice of giving third-party providers access to consumer financial data through application programming interfaces (APIs). The emergence of Banking-as-a-Service is another critical component for traditional banks and financial institutions on their digital transformation roadmap. These trends will accelerate the growth and development of the financial industry and will cater to consumers’ new expectations. Thus, creating a blueprint for digital banking regulatory framework & policy offers India the ability to cement its position as the global leader in Fintech”, he added.

VISION FOR 2022 AND BEYOND: INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

To begin with, tech leaders should be clear about the goals they intend to achieve with their innovation activities. On the one hand, innovation requires a certain amount of risk-taking. CIOs, on the other hand, are typically in charge of offering operational tools. This tension must be recognised early in developing new projects. Innovation programmes can

“Cloud computing will be at the forefront and there will be keen interest in RPA, AI/ML. Agile technologies will continue to drive fast and innovative solutions. Cybersecurity tools will run horizontally across all initiatives. Lastly, greener technologies will start laying the foundation for the future.”

become chaotic and fail to deliver a real effect if they lack a clear purpose. K Bhaskhar Senior Vice President – BIS Segment, Canon India expresses, “Our mission is to continue to bring forward new products and new technologies that will help streamline repetitive day to day tasks and bring in increased convenience, efficiency, and productivity in the BFSI sector. Based on industry feedback, we have continued to add more features to our DMS offerings to make it more robust so that workflows are more streamlined. We are also bringing forth solutions that make it easy for the sector to scan, archive, retrieve data as well as make document classification and data extraction easy. Details of our new products/offering are regularly updated and available on our corporate website.”

On this, Dr. Harshit Jain Founder & Global CEO Doceree speaks, “The plan is to expand to Japan next year and come up with market-specific products to cater to the needs of pharma marketers. We will continue doing partnerships in this domain to further optimise the business goals of pharma brands.”

The digitisation and virtualisation of business will continue in 2022. As businesses transition from a survival strategy to one of thriving, the demand for sustainability, increased data volumes, and faster computer network speeds will drive digital transformation.

Expansion of business and products range is also very important for the organisations Manu Lavanya, Director & Chief Operations Officer, Max Life Insurance conveys, “At Max Life, we will continue to accelerate our vision of becoming a digital first Insurance Co Ltd. The aim is to invest in digital platforms and digital marketing to retain our leadership business in online term business. We will further harness our capabilities to embed intelligence, leverage eco systems and bank partnerships to reduce friction in our journeys. To offer an Omni channel customer experience, we are creating a cloud customer data platform and cloud-first IT Infrastructure to build a solid foundation. We will also continue to invest in process automation.”

Punit Gupta, Founder & CEO, EasyEcom adds to this, “We at EasyEcom have been working round the clock to provide outstanding customer service and guarantee 100 percent value add and satisfaction to our clients. For us, this has resulted in strong word-of-mouth marketing as well as a rapid rate of growth over time. We doubled down on marketing efforts post the pandemic hit last year, and our current social media and content-led marketing are continuing to be the leading source of high-quality leads, which we have consistently been able to convert into paying customers. Our multi-platform SEM campaigns are assisting in the development of a consistent and long-term pipeline. Finally, we have a strong network of partners in logistics, warehousing, shipping, e-commerce financing, and other areas. With a strong reputation among partners and consumers, EasyEcom is aiming to be on the rapid growth trajectory in the coming years”.

CONCLUSION

Growth is not a one-time event; it is a multi-step process that can be described as a journey. And it requires a lot of patience, hard work, and the appropriate mind-set to carry out this procedure. Because many organisations, including major enterprises, lack the in-house expertise required to evaluate new and emerging technologies, business leaders must collaborate closely with IT to select the proper consultants to provide guidance on high-priority initiatives. Companies that use AI devices amass massive volumes of client data. This plethora of data must then be sorted and analysed to make pro-growth decisions based on real-time data. Due to increased speeds made possible by widespread use of the Internet of Things, AI usage will skyrocket in 2022. ●

“The Indian market has tremendous scope”

*“Heightened health consciousness has fueled the wellness industry into overdrive, and it's becoming a more robust, fitter industry. In the last 2 years, the sector witnessed a growing demand for health and wellness products and services, and the companies that grabbed the opportunity at the right time are doing well today” says **Sahil Mehta**, Managing Director & Founder Emmbros Overseas to Elects CIO.*



SAHIL MEHTA

Managing Director & Founder
of Emmbros Overseas

How would you like to describe your journey from St.Botanica to the launch of MuscleXP?

St.Botanica is my first venture; hence it will always be very close to me. When I started St. Botanica, I did have some Ayurveda knowledge that my father passed to me, but I learned and grew as an entrepreneur while building St.Botanica. From just an idea in my mind to a

fully working brand, it took a lot of consistent efforts, perseverance, patience, and constant learning to grow and develop it. St.Botanica was the first brand under the umbrella of Emmbros Overseas. Later, when the brand got accepted and was received well, it motivated me to build more brands that offered natural products and were a result of traditional and scientific research. All the brands serve a particular purpose but majorly concentrate on building restorative wellness solutions that are natural and indigenous.

How did Covid impact the fitness industry and what opportunities do you see amid such uncertainties?

Heightened health consciousness has fueled the wellness industry into overdrive, and it's becoming a more robust, fitter industry. In the last 2 years, the sector witnessed a growing demand for health and wellness products and services, and the companies that grabbed the opportunity at the right time are doing well today. If we look a decade back, people were dubious about taking any wellness product, and particularly in India, if people had flu, they used to opt for home remedies. This scenario has changed drastically today. Furthermore, supplements have become a fundamental part of comprehensive wellness. Hence, the wellness industry is no longer a niche market. Consumers are taking more command of their health, and brands that can quickly distinguish

themselves through the marketplace trends will likely become and remain bosses in the ever-growing wellness industry.

How do you see India as a market? How do you approach the not-so-younger age groups?

The Indian market has tremendous scope. Irrespective of age, wellness is something that is meant for anyone and everyone, though the requirements and needs may vary for different age groups. Due to the elevation of consciousness and inclination towards fitness in the past few years, people have started putting nutritional intake and wellness as their prime concerns. Our unique and out of the box marketing strategies are designed to target different age groups specifically, it brings us, customers, from every age group.

What are growth plans for 2022 and beyond?

We are now concentrating on expanding. Recently St.Botanica and Oriental Botanics were acquired by The Good Glam Group. Hence, the funds will be utilized in the expansion plans of the other 4 brands. Our objective is to reach as many rural places of the country by increasing warehouses and brick-and-mortar units and pushing every product out from the house of Emmbros Overseas. Internationally, we are listed on Amazon US and aim to set up warehouses to reach out to the international audience as well. •

Key to new tech adoption is to build what's needed from short to mid-term and evolve as business grows



AMIT GUPTA
Founder & CEO
Rapyder Cloud Solutions

*"Identifying theft will always remain the biggest concern and stringent processes and hygiene practices will help put check to security threats. We have witnessed breaches of 4.1 billion records in 2019 and it is estimated that businesses of all kinds are expected to spend more than \$1 trillion in security measures in coming years. The rise of Internet of Things (IoT) technology and the prevalence of connected devices will force the breaches to swell by a large number" says **Amit Gupta, Founder & CEO, Rapyder Cloud Solutions***

Technology is reinventing every industry, especially the BFSI sector. How is Rapyder ensuring this transition?

Technology has been ever evolving; however, the speed of evolution has accelerated. Technology is not anymore, the backend team, but is at the center of the board room discussions. Customer experience around buying process and servicing is becoming critical for large enterprises to ensure they stay relevant in the market. New age companies do not have technical debt that they need to manage, also ease of cloud has also taken away the need of huge capital for build need businesses marginalizing the lack of funds to take new age businesses off the ground. This has led to disruptions across all industries and particularly in BFSI. Fintech has seen maximum interest and investments by Investor community.

Rapyder is young age consulting company driven by passionate technologist and leaders. We have helped over 40-50 fintech with various use cases, whether it to move from On Prem to Cloud, Security posture management, deploying Micro services architecture, Text to Speech conversion, Speech to Text conversion all using out of boxes processes and features provided by cloud players.

Key to new tech adoption is to build what's needed for short to mid-term and evolve as business grows. This help manage cost and while reducing time to market leading to faster go-to-market.

What role does the cloud play in assisting the BFSI sector in meeting dynamically changing customer expectations?

Over the last few years new age companies have completely transformed the way services are being consumed, with over 80% digitally buying allowing them to reduce cost of delivery and operations. This has brought in market dynamics for larger BFSI players to adapt or perish.

Typically, large enterprise have been more cautious about changes, not due to lack of intent, but they have legacy technical debt that needs to be factored in during the transformation. New business metrics like % of online buying versus offline are driving the business transformation leading to accelerated technology adoption. And Cloud is at the center of this.

Cloud has played a key role in the acceleration due to its nature of scalability, lower bar of investment, prebuild AI services, managed databases to suffice different business use cases. This probably is the best time for technocrats as well innovators.

There are plenty of examples within Fintech where micro industries have evolved like NeoBankTech, StockTech, InvestTech, PaymentTech, LoanTech, InsureTech etc.

Few publicly referenceable customers who are partially or fully into cloud are Bank Bazaar, NeoGrowth, Loan Tap, Tally, Oxygen, One Assist Consumer Solutions, RupeeRedee, EasyPolicy, PayNearBy etc.

How can we address the concerns of data security, especially when it is offered as SaaS? Are there enough safeguards?

The beauty of Cloud is that Security is joint responsibility. Given the scale at which Hyper-Scalers are operating they can make huge investments and negotiate much better rates with Security OEMs than any enterprise on earth can. These Security features and costs are than passed on to Cloud Adopters. Data residency compliances and Data Security are key components that are Cloud Adopters responsibility.

Identifying theft will always remain, the biggest concern and stringent processes and hygiene practices will help put check to security threats. We have witnessed breaches of 4.1 billion records in 2019 and it is estimated that businesses of all kinds are expected to spend more than \$1 trillion in security measures in coming years. The rise of Internet of Things (IoT) technology and the prevalence of connected devices will force the breaches to swell by a large number.

The complexity is extrapolated due to the impacts of access by cloud service providers, government authorities and staff located around the world. The businesses need to balance compliance, risks and costs to ensure that security exposure can be minimized. This is no different from what business should be doing irrespective of being on prem or with hyperscaler, anyway.

Cloud Providers, with the help of Cloud Consulting partners are working to make Security Posture management easier. Solutions like Security Hub, WAF, Managed Security Services are product features being provided and at Rapyder we are working towards services on top of these product features to help with compliance for customers.

What challenges do you face pertaining to cloud migration?

Few years back hurdle was around awareness, benefits, total cost of ownership and security. These issues over the last few years have been largely addressed. Boardroom questions have moved from why to how

Cloud has played a key role in the acceleration due to its nature of scalability

now. Questions pertain to how much budget, do we have right talent, can we identify the right partner, which cloud provider for what type of workload, modernize-then-migrate/ migrate-then-modernize etc.

Unfortunately, there is no cookie cutter response to these questions, as each business is different, their plans are different, current state of technical journey is also different.

Working with over 400+ our learning has been that customers need to educate that both Cloud Providers and Consulting Partners have created best practices that can help un-lock or discover clinks that can be identified. There are also multitude of Programs being offered by Cloud Providers as well as Consulting Partners that help answers questions around Cost, Talent, When and What to Migrate etc. These teams work with Cloud Providers, Partners and Customer Sponsors to create the blueprint of how such transformation projects can be executed.

What are your growth plans for 2022 and beyond?

Rapyder is just 5+ years young company. We have been doubling customer acquisition, RapyDears team size and revenue almost every 12-15 months. It took us 5 years to cross 200 team. We are working towards our Mission-2023 plan to cross 600-member team and grow the revenue by 17x compared to 2020.

We are also adding new areas of expertise to help our customer. Center of Excellence, with the only charter to build new solutions and delivery acceleration has been formed in 2022. Data Analytics team has been created; we expect to grow this team to 50 people team in next 12 months. Team to create dedicated Security team is being under works.

Looking ahead next 3 to 5 years, Rapyder needs to stay a nimble with customer/employees' obsession at the core of our growth.

Market should look at us as THE go-to-trusted-consulting-partner for all Cloud Services. •

Digital first insurance is our vision, during Covid & beyond:

Manu Lavanya, Director & Chief Operations Officer, Max Life Insurance

*Industries across the globe are in the midst of a technological revolution and the pandemic, which otherwise caused major devastation to human lives and economy, has been interestingly acting as a catalyst and fuelling the digital transformation journey for several sectors and insurance is one such industry that has gracefully embraced the tech-challenges and leveraging the best to serve the dynamically changing customer base. To understand the changes in insurance industry and its transformation from being a pushed product to demand driven product, **Manu Lavanya**, Director & Chief Operations Officer, Max Life Insurance interacted with **Elets News Network (ENN)**.*



MANU LAVANYA

Director & Chief Operations Officer,
Max Life Insurance

Excerpts:

Covid-19 outbreak is now seen as an opportunity to boost digitisation across industries. How is it transforming the insurance sector?

Insurance industry was already on a path of digital transformation even before the pandemic. It has only accelerated digitisation. The sellers /agents transitioned to remote selling and now, even after easing of lockdown we are comfortable with remote interactions with the customers. We also saw that agent advisors were able to create trust with their customers remotely leveraging social media presence. Initially the physical footfalls to Bank branches was impacted which supported the growth of

alternative channels like D2C. We also saw customers adopting digital service transactions and our share of digital transactions went from 45% to 75%.

What is Max Life Innovation Labs 2.0? How are you promoting start-ups through this?

Max Life innovation labs is a Max life start-up accelerator program where Max Life has collaborated with startup eco systems like Startup India, Invest India, AWS etc. to work with Insurtech and start-ups on solving some of our business challenges. We invited start-ups for specific use cases and had over 200 entries. A specific team worked on assigning the potential of these solutions and a mix of internal, external jury selected 5 start-ups in the area of non/



minimally invasive medical tests, digital twin for sales staff enablement, account aggregator for financial underwriting & Health & Wellness. We are currently doing a POC with these start-ups which will be completed by November. Post this we will be scaling up successful start-ups for our operations

What are your views on Insurtech? Do you see it as a collaborative growth opportunity or challenge for insurance industry?

Insurtech is a huge partnership opportunity for traditional insurers. They are an integral part of the ecosystem especially in the areas of customer service, frictionless underwriting, health ecosystems and even platforms for collaboration with new age B2C organisations. We are already collaborating with them through the Max Life Innovation Labs Program

What's your take on disruptive technologies like AI? Are they helping you in optimising your processes?

Leveraging intelligence to drive superior customer experience, sharper risk management and frictionless journey is

At Max Life, we will continue to accelerate our vision of becoming a digital first Insurance Co Ltd.

an important part of our digital strategy. We are leveraging AI across the value chain from running models of existing customer data and data of our partners for sharper prospecting, to integrating risk and persistency models in our onboarding journeys. Also, areas in customer service like intent prediction, speech analytics and photo liveness are also examples of embedding AI in our processes

What tech-driven lessons would you like to take forward from the Covid-19 times to the non-pandemic era?

First, technology can help create empathy and can be used as a medium to develop

trust, secondly customers are far more open to the use of digital means of interaction with brands than they were ever earlier. Third, we need to build resilience in our systems and drive the ability to work from anywhere, any Device. Lastly, technology has enabled more flexibility in workplace and teams can work in distributed-mode efficiently

What are your technology based growth plans for 2021 and beyond?

At Max Life, we will continue to accelerate our vision of becoming a digital first Insurance Co Ltd. The aim is to invest in digital platforms and digital marketing to retain our leadership business in online term business. We will further harness our capabilities to embed intelligence, leverage eco systems and bank partnerships to reduce friction in our journeys. To offer an Omni channel customer experience, we are creating a cloud customer data platform and cloud-first IT Infrastructure to build a solid foundation. We will also continue to invest in process automation, enterprise workflows, HR Self-service apps and portals to build a world class experience for our associates. •

Pandemic has taught us the importance of resilience:

Mahmud Kotebagil, CEO & Co-Founder, Beyond Garage

*Digitalisation and emerging technologies are fast gaining significance across industries around the globe and Covid outbreak is playing a significant role in this regard by accelerating the pace of digital adoption by multiple folds, helping ensure continuity and resilience. Automobile sector, in particular, went through several challenges amid the uncertain times and relevant adoption of technologies is assisting the sector in stabilising the service deliveries to the customer. To understand, how the sector is navigating through the cruising and leveraging the opportunities, **Mahmud Kotebagil**, CEO, Co-founder and Director Beyond Garage, interacted with **Elets News Network (ENN)**.*



MAHMUD KOTEBAGIL
CEO, Co-founder and Director
Beyond Garage

Excerpts of the conversation; Tell us about your operations and services. How are they unique?

Beyond Garage is a one-stop online, hassle-free solution for finding the best mechanic for all the repair and service work of any car or bike, along with ordering the spare parts. We cover anything and everything related to the service of cars and bikes. For instance, periodic maintenance, breakdown services like jumpstart or puncture, car painting, engine repair, electrical work and much more. The idea or the vision of the company is to organise and standardize the world automotive needs and provide transparent, quality as well as affordable services at the comfort of the seat.

There are many unique features that we offer. Here are a few of them:

- **The complete diagnosis and estimation beforehand:** Many users feel that once the vehicle reaches the workshop or the garage, the estimation never remains the same, and the customer always ends up paying more than what was expected. At Beyond Garage, we stick to our promise of a detailed report and one price where the vehicle gets diagnosed by our expert technicians and they provide the estimation which remains the same throughout.
- **Extended warranty:** We have the best process and protocol in the industry along with the right resources, hence, we provide the warranty on the services

which ranges from 30 days up to 24 months.

- **Affordable:** We are around 25 to 60 per cent affordable on the different types of services and we provide a warranty on every service to ensure reliability.
- **Prompt response:** When it comes to the availability and accessibility of our service, we are very prompt. We reach out to the location of the customer within 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the location of course.

How has the Covid outbreak affected your work? What opportunities and lessons did it help you inculcate?

Undeniably, the pandemic upended each and every sector all across the globe. And the automobile industry was no exception. The business was almost standstill during the unprecedented Covid times. It was a challenging time for all of us including our partnered workshop, spare parts shops et al. Considering the effect that Covid has left, nearly 71 per cent of the users have adopted the digital route as compared to pre-pandemic times.

Hence, it was very important for us to provide the means for our vendors to go online and cope up with the market demand, while simultaneously increasing our revenue stream. This created the opportunity for us to work closely with the spare parts shops and workshops to provide the support as needed. However, now that the vaccines have been rolling out, restrictions easing out and travel resuming, we are witnessing good growth with regards to vehicle servicing. The pandemic has taught us the importance of resilience along with catering efficiency.

Online solution for mechanical services sounds interesting but how does that work?

The typical journey of a customer in search of an expert mechanic or a vehicle servicing outlet starts with the discovery of an online platform like us, especially in the pandemic times when technology has been acting as a savior. Once the customer books a service on our website — beyondgarage.in — or via mobile application, our operations team, which is professionally trained and possesses in-depth knowledge about vehicle servicing,



Considering the effect that Covid has left, nearly 71 per cent of the users have adopted the digital route as compared to pre-pandemic times.

interacts with the customer and gathers all the necessary details.

Once the user understands how the journey would be taking place for the particular service, we assign the technician who either do the service at the customer's location or bring the vehicle to our workshop, according to the convenience of the customer.

We start with doing a detailed diagnostic and report generation, where we provide details about what all services are needed to be carried out in the vehicle along with the critical data. This helps the customer in understanding the problem better and taking action to approve the

estimation before starting the service.

One of the unique features that we provide, which has been mentioned in the above question as well, is that we don't change the estimation of the vehicle once it's approved by the customer. The user knows beforehand if any additional costs would be charged. We offer multiple quality checks in between, where we ensure that the work is going as per the company protocol. We bring the transparency of service and parts used in the vehicle with the help of technology. The customer is usually asked to pay only after s/he has been satisfied with the work done. We, at Beyond Garage, provide a warranty of up to five years based on the type of service.

How is technology helping you in your business? Have you deployed any emerging technology recently?

Since the very beginning of its emergence, technology has infiltrated every aspect of our lives. The pandemic has just further accelerated the process. It has been helping us immensely on both the demand and supply side of the business in terms of increasing the efficiency of our operations and supporting our teams. This increases the transparency and allows us to provide hassle-free service to the customers on the go. Recently, we have deployed the end-to-end SOS system and other related systems in view of demand from the users. ●

Covid-19 has enhanced price transparency, customer awareness:

Vijeta Soni, Co-Founder & CEO, Sciative

*The outbreak and the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have changed the world around us significantly. While challenges pertaining to the loss of lives and economy is surely saddening but this uncertainty has also given us several opportunities in disguise and digital adoption is one such factor. To get into the depth of technology intervention and the sudden but significant change in the customer mindset, **Vijeta Soni**, Co-Founder & CEO, Sciative, interacted with **Elets News Network (ENN)***



VIJETA SONI
Co-Founder & CEO
Sciative

During the exclusive conversation, she said, “We have observed a clear surge in digital awareness and the necessity for automated pricing and customer intelligence solutions among businesses. Companies cannot afford to lose a customer because of incorrect price or price ‘perception.’”

Tell us about Sciative and its offerings.

“Sciative” is a combination of two words: Science+Creative. At Sciative, we truly believe that scientific models, theories, and concepts are useless until they are applied creatively to solve real world/business problems.

We have embarked on creating a new path by conceptualizing, designing and developing next generation AI to solve the ‘RIGHT PRICING’ problem that businesses face on a daily basis. Our ultimate vision is to lead the dynamic pricing revolution and enable all businesses to price right every time.

Our ‘RIGHT PRICE’ products serve businesses across the travel, retail, e-commerce, and entertainment industries. The idea of an

AI-powered pricing product came to us when we realised the massive revenue leakages that happen due to incorrect pricing.

Sciative Solutions was incorporated in 2015 and is a leader in helping companies find the right prices for every product, every market, every customer, and every transaction. We are leading the Dynamic Pricing Revolution with our award-winning machine learning and artificial intelligence-powered technology tools. Sciative is powering price optimisation of over 3 billion prices globally across industries such as retail, ecommerce, hospitality, travel, entertainment, technology services, CPG, and industrial products.

How is a dynamic price optimisation system beneficial for businesses in the current scenario? How does it increase growth prospects?

Traditional pricing approaches no longer work in today’s world of constantly evolving market conditions, changing sales channels, and changing customer buying behaviour.

Mega-industries that work with perishable inventory and high market volatility, like travel, retail, cinemas, and entertainment, perennially face a common challenge – pricing. For example, the Indian travel industry (airlines, railways, buses) bleeds over \$25 billion in revenues annually due to untimely and uncompetitive pricing.

'Right Price' setting is one of the most crucial problems in businesses, because any price setting error directly results in revenue leaks and lost customers. However, traditional price management methods by businesses almost never achieve optimal pricing because they are designed for traditional environments, where the frequency of price changes is inherently limited and the complexity of pricing models is constrained by the capabilities of off-the-shelf tools and manual processes.

Scientific Price Optimisation is the most powerful lever for driving the profit margins of a company. Intelligent pricing strategies and tactics can deliver a significant increase in return on sales. To the benefit of a company, small changes in average price can translate into huge changes in profit margin.

Progressive businesses use automated pricing systems to apply a granular, accurate, agile, and integrated pricing approach across their product portfolios. BRIO, which is our AI-powered smart and intelligent pricing system, uses sophisticated predictive and prescriptive models to provide companies with the 'right price for every product, every customer, every time'. It also adds value by providing customer insights and competitive intelligence on a single platform, all of which are seamlessly integrated into core systems and processes.

Emerging technologies are the Gamechangers. What new technologies have you deployed?

The success of our solutions depends majorly on their next generation technical capabilities and built in AI cleverness, which considers 112 parameters simultaneously to optimise price and promotion at great speeds. Our machines process over 3 billion price optimisations daily for over 200 brands and businesses. With our progressive technologies deployed across industries, we leverage:

1. Big Data – Managing multibillion data points for daily price optimisations.
2. Automation – 100% automation is changing the way businesses price.



3. Artificial Intelligence – Self-learning machines that learn patterns from historical synapses, current market and inventory conditions, ongoing demand trends, and predict and prescribe the right educated prices in real time.

4. Pricing Domain Expertise – Over 20 years of experience in Dynamic Pricing and Revenue Management covering Retail, Ecommerce, Casinos, Hotels, Television, Cinemas, Airlines, Taxis, Cruise lines, Theme Parks and more! We are passionate about the right prices that make people buy!

BRIO (our retail SaaS product) and Viaje.ai (our travel SaaS product) are our path-breaking SaaS solutions powered by AI and automation. These tried and tested products in the market are transforming business performance by demonstrating visible improvements in revenues, reducing human-efforts and time in taking accurate pricing decisions.

How has the business scenario changed post the pandemic? How is Sciative catering to the same?

Covid-19 has enhanced price transparency – every customer with an internet connected device is comparing products and prices before making a purchase decision. There are a number of options available across D2C and e-commerce channels.

We have observed a clear surge in digital awareness and the necessity for automated

pricing and customer intelligence solutions among businesses. Companies cannot afford to lose a customer because of incorrect price or price 'perception'.

While the 'Right Price' revolution is slowly but steadily making its way into the Indian markets now, it is important for companies to not indulge in unnecessary pricing wars. Outdated pricing systems lead to spiral pricing reductions within the market, thus bleeding revenues and margins.

This is where Sciative comes in to help them solve the problem.

Using the travel industry as an example, when determining the price of a bus seat, our algorithms consider 83 parameters like historical data, the type of bus, the route it takes, customer behavior, seasonality, likability of a seat, real-time market data (inventory, offers, promotion history), relative sales performance, etc.-every 15 minutes. With all-rounded pricing decisions, we build value our customers and promote healthy competition. This kind of pricing is going well with the price-sensitive target audience, especially due to the aftermath of the pandemic.

In this age of competitiveness, Sciative is using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to bring a Pricing Revolution to India by leveraging the pandemic as a catalyst in three ways:

- Engagement model: Try before you buy, and new entry level offerings to on-board new clients in new segments with modules that deliver significant value fast.
- Enhanced price optimisation features:

Personalized pricing features to maximise the lifetime value of our clients' customer base.

- Extensions: Since inventory planning was getting challenging, it offered AI-powered inventory planning modules to help clients match supply and demand.

We have been associated with leading brands in consumer electronics, arts and crafts, beauty, fashion and lifestyle, F&B. Using our Retail Intelligence solution 'BRIO', we have helped retailers to maintain competitive pricing, create and implement effective promotions and customise store-level assortment to revolutionise their decision-making process by providing instant access to actionable insights. BRIO, through its AI model, has the capability of carrying over 3 billion pricing decisions daily, which has helped brands increase revenue by 30% post implementation and achieve a 20-40% improvement in margins across their product categories.

What are the sectors that you are working for? Please explain how Sciative is helping companies in each sector?

Sciative works in a variety of sectors ranging from retail, travel, media, food and beverages, direct to consumers, fashion, etc. Sciative has mainly 3 SaaS products, BRIO for retail, Viaje.ai for travel, and AdPrice, a solution for the media and entertainment industry powered by AI and automation.

- BRIO by Sciative provides a suite of dynamic solutions that guide retailers to optimised pricing while also assisting them in cutting costs and maximising profitability.
- Viaje.ai for travel. Our machine-learning algorithms analyse real-time travel routes, market behavior, and seating configurations to determine the optimal price, maximising your overall profits.
- AdPrice for media and entertainment industry solutions gives continuous strategic enhancements and assistance at every stage of the process, from initial pricing and automatic data feeds to monitoring budgets and producing weekly performance reports.

What are your business goals and growth plans in the coming years?

This fiscal year, we are excited to offer products



In the future, AI bots will automatically adjust movie theatre ticket prices based on relevant parameters such as the director of the film, leading casts, social media views, downloads of songs and trailers, music genre, the duration of the film, catchment around the hall, past booking patterns, competitive prices, and many more.

in the film and aviation industries. While dynamic pricing in the airline industry is widely

accepted, I'd like to highlight our Cinema product PRICENA. Fixed pricing will be completely removed from cinemas. PRICENA is being tested at a major Indian cinema chain.

In the future, AI bots will automatically adjust movie theatre ticket prices based on relevant parameters such as the director of the film, leading casts, social media views, downloads of songs and trailers, music genre, the duration of the film, catchment around the hall, past booking patterns, competitive prices, and many more. Going to the movies is a wonderful experience.

We intend to disrupt the cinema theatre industry by disrupting and expanding the TG for this sector through 'right pricing.' In the near future, a college-going student group will be able to experience a luxury theatre at affordable prices.

In addition to that, we have seen exponential growth in our last few quarters and we are confident that we will deliver a 4x revenue performance in comparison to FY 2020-21.

Also, we are expanding our customer base in the national and international market in retail, e-commerce, D2C and travel verticals using AI and analytics. We are confident that in the coming years, not only will our product features expand, but so will our team. This year, our major focus area will be to expand our products and services into the aviation industry, cinemas, direct-to-consumer brands, and e-commerce market places in India and internationally. ●

For sustainability, innovation, process streamlining and tech adoption are the new mandates:

Subhakar Rudra, CIO, WPIL Limited



SUBHAKAR RUDDR
CIO, WPIL Limited

*The Covid outbreak brought several challenging circumstances and underlined the criticality of digital transformation across industries. Digitisation, which was already in demand, witnessed major acceleration during the uncertainty, for ensuring resilience and continuity. While digital is the mandate across the globe, manufacturing industry, in particular, is making several interesting deployments and looking forward to transformational changes. To understand the role of tech-deployment in the Machinery Manufacturing Industry, **Shruti Jain** of **Elets News Network (ENN)** interacted with **Subhakar Rudra**, Chief Information Officer, WPIL Limited.*



Excerpts of the conversation:

You have recently joined WPIL from a railway wagon manufacturer. What new experiences and opportunities are you looking forward to gaining?

Digit's fast-paced growth in a short span of time has been very humbling. We started Digit with an aim to make insurance products simple for our customers and our growth story is a testimony that this vision of ours has resonated with Indians who are now actively seeking simpler insurance products more than ever. In a short span of four years, we have managed to serve over 2 crore customers and clock USD 400 million in annual premiums. Digit's overall market share increased to 2% in Q2FY22 from 1.3% in Q2FY21. We also saw significant growth in motor where our market share has grown to 4.3% in Q2FY22 from 3% in Q2FY21.

Technology is reinventing every industry.

How did Digit leverage the disruptive technologies to aid its partner ecosystem?

The products, applications (of Products), services solutions offered by WPIL are completely different from the organisation's I've worked with, so far. On top of that we have presence in and operate across the globe.

I am looking forward to the opportunity of learning a new and different business while working on technology choices that can provide more value to it, power the organisation and let

IT be one of the transformation drivers.

In your new appointment, you would oversee the digital aspects of WPIL Limited. What would be the top priorities?

While the complete digital transformation is overall objective, immediately at the top of the priority list would be,

- Addressing the existing issues that need immediate attention.
- Working on the existing ERP system. Introducing automation across the processes & functions.
- Developing IT policies, procedures and best practices along with setting up cyber-security framework.
- Ensuring systems availability over technology adoption like Cloud.
- Optimisation & standardisation of technology resources to ensure higher RoI while maintaining lower TCO.

In your view, how is the rise of technologies like IoT, RPA, Cloud making the WPIL pumps smarter?

I have joined the organisation very recently. Therefore, it is too early for me to comment.

How would you define the sustainable business roadmap for an organisation, keeping the current situation in mind?

Business road map would differ from an

organisation to another. However, during the current situation, to name few, following common factors need to be taken in to consideration in any business road-map for sustainability.

- ✓ Continuous Innovation.
- ✓ Process Streamlining.
- ✓ Adoption of Techs e.g., automation, Cloud etc.

What tech-based innovations and vistas are you likely to explore in 2022?

Cloud, Data Analytics and Intelligence and SDWAN to start with, while Information Security Tech exploration would run in parallel.

In your view, which technologies will redefine customer engagement in the next five years?

Given the pace at which technologies are evolving with every passing day and the way boundaries are being constantly pushed beyond our imagination, it is pretty difficult to predict the next one year even.

Yet, if I have to predict, the following would be few of the techs that I would expect to play major roles in redefining customer engagement in the next 5 years.

- AI
- AR/VR
- IoT
- Blockchain
- Cloud etc. ●

E-com to soon challenge the volumes in modern trade segment:

Punit Gupta, Founder & CEO, EasyEcom

*Disruptive technologies and their implementation are no longer new to industries across the world. From being a medium to innovation to a necessity for continuity and resilience, technology has gained a lot of importance specially during the last two years. During the pandemic outbreak, a sector that particularly gained importance as e-commerce as everyone was home bound. To understand, how newage technologies are reshaping the e-commerce industry, **Punit Gupta**, Founder & CEO, EasyEcom, interacted with **Elets News Network (ENN)**.*



PUNIT GUPTA
Founder & CEO
EasyEcom

Excerpts:

What challenges and opportunities do you see amid the pandemic situation?

How has your organisation evolved?

There has been a drastic change in buying patterns for masses globally and everyone has started to rely much more on eCommerce for daily necessities, resulting in a significant boost to growth of the eCommerce ecosystem.

With the uncertainty involved around when this pandemic will get over, the growth has expedited manifolds and brands are compelled to join the eCommerce bandwagon as a CXO level priority. Almost all the large brands we work with, are reporting a clear mandate from their to board to prepare for 15-20% market share to be driven by eCommerce. This is a game changer as this will soon start to challenge the volumes in the modern trade segment that was

anticipated to be the fastest growing sector in retail.

However, eCommerce is still not a 100% streamlined business model. Several challenges remain, let us discuss the major ones here.

Dwindling Consumer confidence and Stock Market Volatility

At the onset of the pandemic, people panicked across the world, causing them to rush from store to store (both online and offline) to purchase essential items in large quantities. Also stock markets plunging due to uncertainties ahead did a huge damage to consumer confidence and in turn crashing the retail sales overnight. Consumers have been ordering an increased volume of essentials to be consumed in the coming months as a result of the “stay-at-home” mandate.

Unpredictable demand has resulted

from erratic purchase patterns, resulting in supply shortages. Due to massive fluctuations in consumer behaviour toward essential products, even stores that had well-managed inventory have suffered setbacks. Thus, there is a need for demand forecasting for efficient inventory management.

Website traffic is on the rise - brands need to play catch up

During the lockdown, e-Commerce stores that sold daily necessity products experienced unprecedented surge in web traffic. Many physical stores that did not manage their websites or web applications effectively suffered greatly. On the other hand, their e-store struggled to cope with the increased traffic and failed to provide customers with a smooth user experience. Furthermore, several stores did not receive qualified traffic due to a lack of digital marketing efforts. Across the boards, there seems to be a rush now to become eCommerce ready both from technology and marketing efforts perspective.

Superior Supply Chain Management is needed for successful eCommerce engine to run.

Global supply chain management markets have been disrupted as a result of imposing lockdowns as a means of controlling the pandemic. On top of that - China, the world's largest goods manufacturer, has seen a huge drop in orders and agreements due to the political tension between various countries and the Chinese government. The Pandemic caused chaos in the global value chain's (GVC) hub regions, including the United States, Europe, and China. Several large D2C brands were left with very little inventory and ended up listing out to other competitors. There is a clear need to optimise the supply chain here onwards to make it foolproof with multiple failover setups in place.

Broken eCommerce technology & Untrained manpower

Biggest hurdle that the existing brands face in driving eCommerce in their organisations is the technology gap and manpower skill set needed to handle eCommerce business. Large brands usually operate on legacy ERPs which are not really equipped to handle eCommerce at all. Additionally the operation and finance department workforce is majorly unskilled to take on the eCommerce way of doing business.

There are several trends and opportunities emerging despite all the problems we talked about. Let us discuss a few of them here.

Add New Regions/Markets to the Webstore

If you want to cater to a global audience, you need to have a digital presence. With a webstore, you can expand your customer base beyond your current customers. Expanding your online presence to places where you might not have a strong presence otherwise will allow your brand to reach new markets and reach a larger audience.

The number of internet connections in India increased significantly to 782.86 million in April 2021, thanks to the 'Digital India' program.

Using a reliable eCommerce platform to build a B2C or D2C website will help you avoid supply chain disruptions and leverage new and effective ways to increase revenue from the online space.

Taking Your Company Online

You are already behind if you only rely on your offline stores to generate revenue. Numerous face-to-face business opportunities have been harmed as a result of the pandemic. It is, however, the most advantageous time to encourage and attract customers to shop online. You can even make a sale by connecting with your existing customers online on WhatsApp. It's that simple, so why wait to get started?

Omni channel model for eCommerce
Successful eCommerce strategy depends on tight system integrations and continual inventory clearance. In case of offline stores

with stuck inventory, now brands are looking at using their offline stores as dark stores for fulfilling online orders.

Additionally, ensuring that the brand is live across all eCommerce platforms along with the D2C channels is the key to drive the growth. Listing on amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Ajio etc will ensure customers can find you no matter where they shop. Omnichannel presence also helps you build customer confidence in the brand.

It is quite evident that eCommerce is not an easy nut to crack. We see this as an opportunity to help brands achieve their goals. Our state of the art omnichannel inventory and warehouse management solution is helping some of the top brands capture the eCommerce growth opportunity. Since pandemic started, we rapidly added team members to be able to tackle the increase in demand. We are now 4x the team size we were at the beginning of 2020.

Besides that we have beefed up our account management teams to help brands with quality customer service that they need in order to grow.

How are you helping the e-commerce segment with the recent surge in demand? How are you gearing up for the festive season?

In India, e-commerce has changed the way people do business. From US\$ 46.2 billion in 2020, the Indian e-commerce market is expected to grow to US\$ 111.40 billion by 2025. An increase in internet and smartphone penetration has sparked much of the industry's growth. The number of internet connections in India increased significantly to 782.86 million in April 2021, thanks to the 'Digital India' program. 61 percent of all internet connections were made in urban areas, with 97 percent of those connections being wireless.

During the festive season, E-commerce giants are here with heavy discounts on their online platforms to match the festive mood of the country. E-tailers will offer steep discounts on a variety of products as well as cash back on purchases. Instant discounts have also been announced by the websites and respective brands on shopping done using debit or credit cards online, thanks to tie-ups with several banks.

As an operating system for e-commerce businesses, we help brands with a multitude

of functionalities to ease operations around inventory control, warehouse management, payment reconciliation, accounting automation and so on. eCommerce by nature is a very high volume and low margin business and the only way to make it viable is to deploy automation to every part of the business possible. At EasyEcom, we aim at providing tech solutions to brands to help them achieve this goal. We want to help them manage their sales better so that the top line increases, as well as help them reconcile in order to maintain their bottom line.

Would you like to tell us about your cloud-based technology platform?

The hosting and delivery of information and on-demand computing resources over the Internet via a remote network of servers is referred to as cloud computing. Due to the ease of use and lower maintenance, many technology applications that were once popular as installed software are now preferred as cloud applications.

Since consumers and online retailers now have access to cloud computing, it has helped businesses immensely increase their earning potential while also providing customers with access to thousands of stores. The following are some additional advantages of cloud computing:

Accessibility- Having a catalog of products or services stored remotely allows potential customers to access the ecommerce site from virtually anywhere on the planet.

Pay-Per-Use- Computing resources are measured on a granular level, and end users only pay for what they need.

Scalability- It can dynamically increase or decrease in response to the needs of online retailers.

Data security- Information is stored on a remote server, so no data is lost if a personal computer or internal network fails. EasyEcom offers end-to-end management for inventory, warehousing, payment reconciliation, order management for eCommerce businesses. Any fast growing business can derive benefits mentioned below:

- Inventory Procurement through automated Purchase Order Management- Foresee the demand for various products and order in advance to avoid stock-out and potentially missing out on sales



- Omnichannel Order Processing & Centralized Inventory Management- Manage Multichannel seamlessly by monitoring and managing inventory across channels in real-time
- State-of-art Warehouse Management System to manage order routing, splitting, inventory across multiple warehouse locations with advanced shipping rules- Ensure that customers always get the products that they desire. A right warehouse management system eliminates all risks of missed orders and under utilised inventory.
- Automated & accurate payment reconciliation to track and prevent losses of unpaid orders, extra shipping charges, wrong deductions- Maintain and track the financial aspect involved with respect to product charges
- Accounting Automation with auto synchronisation with ERP- Real-time accounting and ERP helps to offer automated processes and transaction recording, reporting, and analysis
- Advance reporting and analytics around customers and their buying patterns to identify growth opportunities- Analyse customer buying behaviours and preferences that can help to predict their future buying patterns, thus offering businesses useful insights

Would you like to tell us about your recent funding? How are you planning to place it!

EasyEcom is backed by industry experts and leading early stage funds from the USA. Amistad Ventures led the growth focused funding round in 2019 and since then the company has been profitable and growing rapidly.

What are your growth plans for 2021 and beyond?

We at EasyEcom have been working round the clock to provide outstanding customer service and guarantee 100 percent value add and satisfaction to our clients. For us, this has resulted in strong word-of-mouth marketing as well as a rapid rate of growth over time.

We doubled down on marketing efforts post the pandemic hit last year, and our current social media and content-led marketing are continuing to be the leading source of high-quality leads, which we have consistently been able to convert into paying customers. Our multi-platform SEM campaigns are assisting in the development of a consistent and long-term pipeline. Finally, we have a strong network of partners in logistics, warehousing, shipping, e-commerce financing, and other areas.

With a strong reputation among partners and consumers, EasyEcom is aiming to be on the rapid growth trajectory in the coming years. ●

AI, ML will continue to dominate aviation industry: **Vinod Bhat, Chief Information Officer, Vistara**

*In the age of new normal where being contactless is the need of the hour, aviation industry is gearing up to embrace tech solutions to track the spread of Covid-19, making travel convenient, touch less and seamless. To understand how tech-driven innovations are driving the aviation industry, **Shruti Jain** of **Elets News Network (ENN)** had an exclusive conversation with **Vinod Bhat**, Chief Information Officer, Vistara.*



VINOD BHAT
Chief Information Officer
Vistara

Edited excerpts of the conversation:

How will AI change the scenario of the aviation in future?

XArtificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) will continue helping the aviation industry in improving operations, managing route networks better and enhancing safety, customer services and customer support. Industries around the world use AI and other emerging technologies to provide customised services and advance customer experience. Going forward, AI and ML will continue its dominance in the aviation industry across various areas.

- **Passenger Identification** - AI-enabled tools will speed up the process of identifying passengers. Safety scanners, machine learning tools, and Biometric Identification will reduce dependence on the manual processes used by the global workforce.

- **Baggage Screening** - AI can help in the luggage test feature, designed to protect the X-ray equipment from dangerous objects and other threats scanned in the X-ray system during the luggage test
- **Customer Support** - Customer service and support are amongst the most critical areas of an airline's operations. AI can enable real-time identification using historical data at contact centers and other channels. It can help in proactively addressing several issues in a highly cost-effective manner.
- **Predictive Maintenance** - Using real-time data and historical data, operators can make more informed decisions about when the machine or a part will need to be repaired/replaced.
- AI can assist enterprises in analysing customer preferences, location, budget, cuisine, preferences, etc. to deliver personalised offers and services

How is Vistara leveraging new technologies like RPA, touchless contact, Big Data & Analytics in their working models?

Vistara, since inception, has been at the forefront of technology adoption and leadership. We are the first airline to have introduced touchless/paperless boarding at a few Indian airports two years ago and we continue to invest in various web/mobile digital technologies to revamp the way our customers travel.

Given the complexity of airline operations and the dynamic nature of the business we operate in, we are one of the few airlines in the world to have 100% cloud-based IT infrastructure. This makes things a lot more efficient and easier, helps us optimise our costs, deploy seamless operations and make the organisation dynamically scalable. From website and mobile application enhancement to passenger identification and baggage screening, to customer support and predictive maintenance, we heavily relied on technology/artificial intelligence to strengthen processes and facilitate a seamless travel experience for passengers.

Our teams have developed big data solutions for a comprehensive view of our customers and their needs. We are on a digital transformation journey and are enhancing our "NextGen Connected eCommerce Ecosystem" which will extend the digital experience further to customers and enable business to drive sales and marketing strategies. It will provide an impeccable experience to our passengers through personalised content that caters to their specific needs. In terms of automation and productivity improvement, we are in the process of transforming our fleet maintenance operations. The e-enabling data exchange between aircraft and base has been further enhanced for uploading software updates and to download automatically generated reports and logs etc. Flight planning and network planning are also processes that we are automating by developing solutions for intelligent flight operations.

What are the major challenges being faced by you in the process of recovery after covid-19?

Aviation industry has been under a lot of pressure and got significantly impacted during the pandemic. Following the outbreak of

Covid-19, the fear of exposure during air travel was one of the biggest concerns amongst travelers and the collective challenge in front of the industry was to rebuild passenger confidence in flying.

Vistara was already on its digital transformation journey, one that has only been fast tracked due to the pandemic. There was a natural focus on stepping up safety and hygiene measures across various touchpoints. Minimising human contact through touchless solutions was key to ensuring safety throughout the passenger's journey.

Vistara is also closely working with the Airport Authority of India to deploy biometrics across the airports in the country, in a phased manner.

Vistara introduced several tech-enabled processes to minimise physical contact between customers and staff. Casting of kiosk screens on passenger mobile, scan & fly, self-tagging, self-baggage drop, self-boarding, e-gates, biometrics/face recognition, e-boarding passes, and bag tags are all touchless solutions that have been helpful in the direction of making air travel safer and getting passengers to repose their trust in flying.

Being a CIO, how you are upskilling the capabilities of Vistara to stay relevant & competent in the upcoming digital future of the aviation industry?

Vistara has invested into the digital infrastructure from the very beginning, including CLOUD, big data, analytics, B2C technologies and so on. Vistara's digital

center of excellence helps in staying abreast with the technology changes happening in the industry, by focusing on developing solutions to address key business problems. We work with our partner ecosystem and the service providers in our digital transformation journey.

Can we expect biometric technologies like facial recognition, touchless boarding, & retinal scanning initiated by Vistara in the next two years?

Since its inception, Vistara has been at the forefront of embracing new technologies to offer a seamless and hassle-free travel experience to its customers. As a young airline, any concept that promises to enhance customer experience finds the right place in Vistara in the form of experimentation, prototype or a full-fledged solution. In 2019, in partnership with a few Indian airports, we became the first Indian airline to run trials of a biometric facial recognition entry and boarding solution for passengers flying within India. Besides, kiosk check-in (Scan-N-Fly), E-bag tag and automated baggage drop are some of the key initiatives that already in place. We have kept a sharp focus on leveraging biometric technology to make travelling increasingly seamless across customer touchpoints. In future, under the digital boarding process, Vistara customers can simply enroll themselves using their ID and biometric data, combined with their flight details, before entering the terminal. As they navigate through the airport, they can conveniently put their travel documents away to be verified at every touchpoint by the biometric technology. Facial check-in process offers the highest degree of safety and security. The biometric data is used only for authentication and verification of passengers to assist at all the airport processes. Vistara is also closely working with the Airport Authority of India to deploy biometrics across the airports in the country, in a phased manner. We are also working on voicebot (AI) technology to enhance customer experience.

We continue to invest in various web/mobile/social digital technologies to revamp the way our customers travel, and we ensure state of art Infrastructure and technology for a frictionless travel experience for our customers in the coming years as well. •

Manufacturing is frequently referred to as a fundamental component of society

*"Increased use of robotics, automation solutions, and computerisation are all part of the digitisation process, which allows for cost savings, increased efficiency and productivity, and greater adaptability to change. The pharmaceutical industry, on the other hand, has been resistant to digitalisation, owing to a lack of experience and the complexity of the development and manufacturing processes involved. Despite this, there is a clear need to digitalise the pharmaceutical industry, as demand for both traditional and new drugs continue to rise", says **Nikhil Kaushik**, Managing Director, Fortcaps Healthcare, in a conversation with **Elets News Network (ENN)**.*



NIKHIL KAUSHIK
Managing Director
Fortcaps Healthcare

What inspires you to start a business?

Fortcaps was founded to meet the growing demand for empty capsules in the pharmaceutical industry. Many businesses have struggled to keep up with technological advancements. What's needed is for it to become ingrained in the everyday workforce, which can only be done by experts and those with the necessary skills. With fewer competitors around the world making empty capsules using proper technology and automation, this industry has a lot of long-term benefits and is also very sustainable. The demand for empty capsules is growing all the time, and manufacturing in large quantities isn't for everyone. To deal with the manufacturing process, you'll need a lot of technical knowledge and a capable team.

What distinguishes FortCaps from other capsule manufacturers?

To increase the production of empty capsules, Fortcaps follows the principle of utilising the most up-to-date technologies and implementing the necessary automation processes. Fortcaps has become a household

name in the pharmaceutical industry and has established itself as one of India's most dependable and well-known industries. The most innovative concept was implemented in 2016, when machine learning-based camera technology inspected all the manufactured capsules and provided 100 percent accuracy, effectively removing error. Fortcaps also allows customers to customise products with their own content/logo, making it easier for the company to maintain its brand identity.

What role does digital technology play in the pharmaceutical industry?

Any manufacturing industry's digitalisation is a critical step in the production process' advancement. Increased use of robotics, automation solutions, and computerisation are all part of the digitisation process, which allows for cost savings, increased efficiency and productivity, and greater adaptability to change. The pharmaceutical industry, on the other hand, has been resistant to digitalisation, owing to a lack of experience and the complexity of the development and manufacturing processes involved. Despite this, there is a clear need

to digitalize the pharmaceutical industry, as demand for both traditional and new drugs continue to rise. Pharma digitalisation should be closely linked to the main aspects of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), and success will require a constant focus on GMP.

What do you think the Manufacturing Industry will look like in the next five years?

Manufacturing is frequently called a fundamental component of society. From human-centered methods to machine-reliant assembly lines to highly automated factories, manufacturing has progressed dramatically. Companies should use robots to perform repetitive tasks rather than relying on humans to do so. We are surrounded by technology everywhere we look, and manufacturing industries should grasp the concept of incorporating AI into their operations. Predictive maintenance, improved quality, and the ability to produce smart products are all benefits of digitalisation. Manufacturers should improve production in three dimensions, according to the popular BCG: plant structure, plant digitisation, and plant processes. Manufacturing will undergo a fundamental transformation from a dream to a reality. Automation will play a critical role in the workforce's dominance.

In your opinion, what are the current market scenarios for pharmacies?

Regarding product development, commercial production, and real-time monitoring, automation is transforming pharma. It can promote manufacturing excellence by utilising sensors and identification systems to not only assist companies in complying with



“Manufacturers should improve production in three dimensions, according to the popular BCG: plant structure, plant digitisation, and plant processes.”

regulations, but also in doing so at the lowest possible cost. Automation is used not only in manufacturing, but also in logistics and delivery systems. When transporting medicines, special precautions are taken, such as storing them in insulated chambers that keep them isolated and unaffected by temperature or other factors. India is being viewed as a manufacturing hub around the world, which has enticed more investors to invest in the country. India now produces half of the world's pharmaceuticals, including critical vaccines and life-saving drugs. A recent example is the Coronavirus vaccine, which was developed in India and distributed throughout the world. Pharmaceuticals have a bright future ahead of them.

What are your company's plans for expansion and growth?

Rather than replacing existing jobs, it will create new ones. Sensors, machine learning, computer vision, robotics, and other advanced technologies have proven to improve supply chain resiliency for manufacturers who have adopted them. To reap the benefits of automation, now, manufacturing companies are looking to integrate the benefits of shared support services and shared environments. This can be accomplished in several ways, including the establishment of Centers of Excellence (CoE), the enhancement of each step of the automation process, and the optimal use of data collected through sensors. The next five years will set manufacturing industry standards and serve as a foundation for decades to come. •



“At Cisco IT, we are committed to use technology for measuring and improving workforce and workspace experience”

The pandemic has effectively demonstrated how far technology can go in improving lives. Digitisation and other emerging trends have opened several doors for tremendous growth and transformation across all critical sectors. I truly believe that the time to reimagine our future and make it more sustainable and inclusive has never been so pertinent. To know how the role of CIOs evolved during the pandemic;

Nidhi Shail Kujur of Elets News Network (ENN) interacted with Dharmendra Rangain, CIO, Cisco India, and SAARC.



DHARMENDRA RANGAIN
CIO, Cisco India, and SAARC

Given the two unprecedented years businesses have gone through and the leaps made in digital transformation, how has the role of the CIO evolved during the pandemic?

The past two years have made us more dependent on digital technologies to stay connected. Organisations had to immediately adapt to newer technological innovations to provide business resiliency. The most notable change for companies has been the realisation that whatever can be delivered digitally must be delivered digitally. This massive digital adoption has catalysed a considerable shift in the CIO's role.

Even before the pandemic, the CIO's role was already shifting from a technology leader to a cross-functional business leader. During the initial days of the crisis, it is commendable how CIOs across sectors supported their IT teams – from managing the rapid shift to remote work and the complex IT ecosystem to enabling businesses, healthcare, and other critical functions securely and seamlessly.

According to Gartner, worldwide IT spending is projected to total \$4.5 trillion

in 2022, an increase of 5.1% from 2021. So, today, CIOs are no longer just the curators of IT within their organisations. The role demands a mindset shift towards spearheading and shaping business strategy in a digital world. With hybrid becoming the new world order, the time is now for a CIO to prioritize the effective adoption and implementation of newer technologies, foster innovation, create elevated customer experience, and keep the workforce and workplace safe from evolving cyber-attacks and ultimately enable business growth.

With hybrid becoming the norm, how is Cisco powering the hybrid world? How is Cisco as an end-user of technology, embracing these changes?

Looking at the way life has changed over the last two years; we know that hybrid work is the present and future. According to a recent Cisco study, 76% feel that their role can be performed as well remotely as in the office, and 71% of employees want the hybrid work model to become the norm. But it is no longer enough to solve the challenges of remote work or support a safe office reentry. It's about finding solutions to thrive and innovate.

Wi-Fi has become the primary network of choice for our users at the office. We have started deploying next generation wireless networking with Wi-Fi6 and AI-based solutions like DNA-Assurance to provide the best experience for them.

At Cisco IT, we are committed to use technology for measuring and improving workforce and workspace experience. We have the unique ability to glean insights from a wide range of tools enabling hybrid work across networks, endpoints, and applications from millions of customers globally. For example, we use the Cisco DNA Spaces solution to get insights on how our employees collaborate in the office, which areas are more crowded, etc., and change the workplace design in a much more agile way. Using Webex, we provide inclusive, simple, smart, and secure hybrid work experiences from anywhere.

On the other hand, the explosion of bandwidth demands puts significant stress on network capacity, pushing organisations to deploy SD-WAN and secure access server edge (SASE), as it enables networks to access cloud workloads and SaaS applications securely.

Most importantly, security is also a key driver for successful hybrid work, and security is built into all our products. We use Cisco's Zero Trust solutions and improve the security and user experience. Most of the major applications running in our private cloud environment are now available, without having to connect to a VPN. Not only has this improved the user experience with less clicks, but instead of looking at the device posture only when they connect to the network maybe once a day, we now could continuously monitor the posture of the device and allow access to the application level.

What role does technology play in building an inclusive, sustainable future for all?

The pandemic has effectively demonstrated how far technology can go in improving lives. Digitisation and other emerging trends have opened several doors for tremendous growth and transformation across all critical sectors. I truly believe that the time to reimagine our future and make it more sustainable and inclusive has never been better.

Firstly, Cisco has committed to Net Zero emissions by 2040. We have already passed the 80% mark on Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and our target is to be 100% Net Zero by 2025 for Scope 1 & 2. At Cisco IT, we are also continuously working on reducing carbon emissions. For example, in our newer buildings, we are deploying complete Power Over Ethernet solutions based on

Catalyst switches along with partner solutions for lighting, environmental monitoring, and control. This drastically cuts down on CO2 emissions and brings in several operational benefits. We also re-cycle all our patch cords and racks of decommissioned servers.

Additionally, as workplaces go hybrid, people in the hinterlands will have access to diverse job opportunities, making them more diverse and inclusive. Recognizing the importance of flexibility and access to diverse talent, at Cisco, we recently announced our move to a permanent hybrid work model for all our employees globally. Much like how work has fundamentally changed, the purpose of our physical spaces must fundamentally change too. Instead of a focus on the where, the focus is on the work.

Our engineering teams are working diligently to continue improving the energy efficiency of our products, saving energy, and reducing carbon emissions for our customers and us. As we move forward, we want to create an environment that will stand out in years to come for generations to reflect on Cisco's motto to power an inclusive and sustainable future for all.

What are the biggest opportunities and challenges for CIOs, and how can they be prepared to meet them?

CIOs demonstrated incredible ingenuity and strength during the pandemic. However, they must keep up the momentum in providing long-term digital value to enterprises. According to Gartner, overall IT spending in India will reach \$110.6 billion in 2022, up 6.3% from 2021. As an IT leader, now is the time to make bolder decisions, assume newer responsibilities that will boost customer and employee experience, and guard against evolving cyberattacks. But with the opportunity to transform comes the hurdles and gaps such as the ever-evolving threat landscape, to continuously bolstering security architecture and finding and retaining the right talent.

Firstly, managing the new-age digital, hybrid workforce and creating digital agility should be among the biggest priorities that CIOs need to address—strengthening existing technology offering for a seamless offline and online experience – tools that spell productivity and secure collaboration. Secondly, security must be a top concern. Fortifying the existing security portfolio that ensures the enterprise is protected, whether it's the corporate office or the home office. Thirdly, committing to sustainability. Implementing the right technologies and practices is the key to meeting ESG goals that an enterprise uses to track

progress. Investing in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and the internet of things can address material issues such as sustainable sourcing and product transparency.

Lastly, what are the most in-demand IT and soft skills for the future?

According to McKinsey, demand for tech workers worldwide will rise by 55% by 2030. Digital disruption and the overnight transition to hybrid work have exposed alarming digital skills divides. Today, IT professionals need skills that are more deep and agile. Some of the critical IT skills in today's hyperconnected world are Cybersecurity, Cloud computing, DevOps, AI/ Machine Learning, Data Analytics, Blockchain, and Software/Mobile development.

SDX or Software Defined Everything is another area of focus for Cisco IT. As software development becomes cloud-native, it has become critical to focus on automating everything in the infrastructure space, be it day 0 configuration of infrastructure or add/move/change till complete decommissioning. Software developers want everything in the private cloud as APIs. We have been delivering that for the last few years. App developers have the freedom to deploy the app in the private cloud, all from their CI/CD pipelines. If they are deploying in a hybrid cloud, where the public cloud needs to talk to the private cloud, they can create that network overlay in just a few clicks on their own.

On the campus and core network, what used to take about 480 minutes of work to bring up a new site, we have reduced it to less than 30 minutes using automation. Using automation, we have also reduced the time needed for the software upgrade of a site by 59% (DNAC SWIM). The key to success here is changing the skillset and mindset of the workforce, not just processes and platforms.

One thing I would strongly recommend is using Cisco DevNet to learn and get certified. It has tons of documentation, cookbooks, sandboxes to play with, and put that learning in to practice.

Similarly, soft skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving are equally important, along with self-management skills such as continuous learning, flexibility, and resilience. As a result, the Cisco Networking Academy provides in-demand digital skills such as Networking, OS & IT, Programming, IoT, Infrastructure Automation, and Cybersecurity and has trained over 10,50,000 learners since its inception. India's burgeoning youth presents a considerable opportunity. By addressing the skill divide, the country can achieve its vision of becoming a \$5 trillion economy and a global digital superpower. •

“What sets InstaSafe Technologies apart is that its concept of Zero Trust is based on the Software Defined Architecture”

Instasafe is working with various cybersecurity ecosystem partners such as DSCI, Nasscom, Cloud Security Alliance, and CISO community in spreading cybersecurity awareness through panel discussions, webinars, research reports, and various other initiatives. Cybersecurity is often considered a reactive approach by many organisations which could be dangerous for business operations. Instasafe is trying to inculcate a proactive mindset among organisation leaders through various marketing initiatives. To understand what sets Instasafe Technologies apart from the other cybersecurity players in the industry

Nidhi ShailKujur of **Elets News Network (ENN)** interacted with **Sandip Panda**, CEO & Co-Founder, Instasafe Technologies.



SANDIP PANDA

CEO & Co-Founder, Instasafe Technologies

How does Instasafe stand apart in the cybersecurity ecosystem?

With the new work environment of hybrid workplaces, cloud applications, and BYOD, the concept of perimeter security has become obsolete. The corporate network now spans the entire internet, and the only way to offer users – employees, customers, vendors, partners – comprehensive protection, no matter where they connect from, is to move security and access control to the cloud. Thus, the Zero Trust security framework has come to be the norm, given its elasticity, security, and extensibility. While there are many cybersecurity firms today offering Zero Trust solutions to enterprises, what sets apart InstaSafe Technologies is that its concept of Zero Trust is based on the Software Defined Architecture (SDP)

proposed by the Cloud Security Alliance (CSA), wherein it helps organisations adopt a completely new approach to their security set-up, rather than depending on legacy solutions. InstaSafe's zero-trust security strategy can help organisations increase their cyber resiliency and manage the risks of a disconnected business environment, while still allowing users access to the appropriate resources. It's a model plan that uses context to securely connect the right users to the right data at the right time.

Instasafe is the only vendor from Asia Pacific region to be featured in the Gartner 2022 Market Guide Report on Zero Trust Network Access. InstaSafe is also a proud winner of “Security Product Company of the Year 2021” organised by Data Security Council of India (DSCI). Instasafe is also featured as High Performer in G2 (Leading Software review platform)

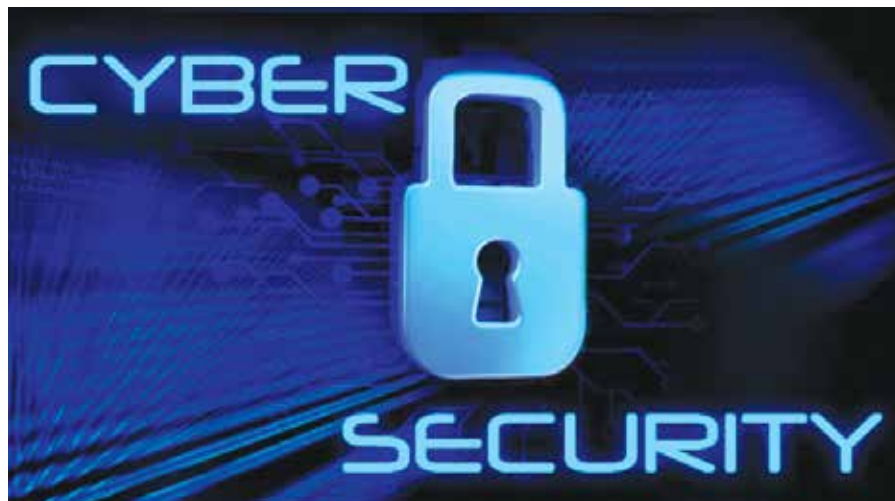
What is Zero Trust security? What are its core principles?

The core principle of Zero Trust security is "Never Trust, Always Verify". Zero Trust is a concept which addresses the excessive trust problem that lies with Perimeter-based security solutions such as VPN. Zero Trust makes sure that right users with authorized devices access only the permissible applications at the right time. Zero Trust is a holistic secure access solution combining security controls of user identity, device posture, network, infrastructure, applications, and data.

Some of the benefits of Zero Trust security include- 1. Least Privilege access where user is provided role-based access policies to grant users the minimum access necessary to do their jobs; 2. Segmented application access which guarantees that users can only access what they are allowed to access through application-specific tunnels; 3. Continuous monitoring of network and device behavior.

What are the top challenges today for a cybersecurity firm? How do you plan to tackle them?

For a cybersecurity firm, one of the top challenges is creating cyber security



"Zero Trust makes sure that users with authorised devices access only the permissible applications at the right time."

awareness. Cybersecurity awareness is lacking across the organisation, from top management to junior level employees. There is no proper mechanism within an organisation on how to make cybersecurity awareness as part of their culture. Every new employee needs to be trained on basic cybersecurity topics and there needs to be mechanisms in place for training all employees on cybersecurity topics on a periodic basis.

Instasafe is working with various cybersecurity ecosystem partners such as DSCI, Nasscom, Cloud Security Alliance, and CISO community in spreading cybersecurity awareness through Panel discussions, webinars, research reports, and various other initiatives.

Cybersecurity is often considered a reactive approach by many organisations which can prove dangerous for business operations. Instasafe is trying to inculcate a proactive mindset among organisation

leaders through various marketing initiatives.

Enterprises are migrating to digital transformation, leading to more vulnerability towards cyberattacks. How does Instasafe address these challenges & shield the enterprise from such attacks?

As enterprises are rapidly adopting digital transformation, cloud migration from private data centers is one of the top transformation projects enterprises are adopting. During cloud migration secure data migration is one of the key challenges. Instasafe secure access creates a secure encrypted tunnel between multiple cloud infrastructures for secure cloud data migration. Instasafe is helping enterprises in their secure cloud transformation journey.

Can you shed more light on why every enterprise should shift to Zero Trust Security?

During this pandemic, there is a surge of security breaches because of remote work scenarios. Hybrid work culture is going to be the future of the work environment. That makes it even more important to adopt a Zero Trust solution. Gartner predicts that more than 60% of enterprises will adopt Zero Trust solutions replacing legacy solutions such as VPN by 2024. Zero Trust is the most trending topic in cybersecurity and remains a key discussion point in organisations' board room meetings involving CISO, CIOs. •



Doceree is disrupting Physician marketing landscape, digitally:

Dr. Harshit Jain, Founder & Global CEO, Doceree

*The sudden outbreak of deadly Covid-19 brought several challenges especially for the healthcare industry but also with some opportunities in disguise, primarily in the form of digital push. The digital transformation has brought efficiency and speed towards treatment delivery. To understand, how meaningful digital alliances among healthcare and pharmaceutical industry players are benefiting each other lately, **Dr. Harshit Jain**, Founder & Global CEO, Doceree, interacted with **Elets News Network (ENN)**.*



DR HARSHIT JAIN
Founder & Global CEO
Doceree

Healthcare industry was at the centre of Covid outbreak. What challenges and opportunities did you witness during this time?

Coronavirus outbreak has accelerated the adoption of digital in the healthcare sector. Data suggests that the Pharmaceutical sector had been hesitant in opening up to digital mediums. However, post COVID-19, a new picture has emerged as traditional marketing investments got halted during this time. Pharmaceutical brands are now waking up to the reality of digital and how platforms like Doceree can make their marketing efforts effective and efficient, and even cut costs. Prior to COVID, we hadn't seen such faster conversions in the healthcare industry. Meaningful digital alliances among industry players that are mutually beneficial are essential to keep the momentum steady. Pharmaceutical brands and digital platforms have a lot to capitalise on at the moment by way of forging 'effective and efficient' partnerships. It will ensure that the growth they witnessed during this hour would last beyond the current crisis. While pharma brands might have had been

a laggard in exploiting the potential of digital marketing so far, they are now getting ready to embrace the medium to the fullest.

How do you explain the Physician-only platform? How is Doceree different?

Doceree is disrupting the Physician marketing landscape much in the same way digital ad networks transformed the consumer marketing space. To realize our mission and vision, we created the First Global Network of Physician-only Platforms for Programmatic Marketing. Doceree's integrated and collaborative ecosystem enables pharmaceutical brands and digital platforms to mutually benefit from untapped opportunities present in Physician marketing in the most 'regulatory compliant and transparent manner'. With Doceree, Rx drug marketers can now promote their brands in the digital domain to Physicians without bothering about the nitty-gritty of regulations. At the same time, Doceree provides an opportunity for digital platforms to make more revenue. With our platform, they can now focus on their core business and the problems they are solving in healthcare than swaying their attention to making more monies.

Over the last decade, innovative digital business models emerged in a lot of sectors and helped companies reduce marketing costs significantly. However, pharmaceuticals by and large remained an exception in opening up to digital mediums. The marketing approaches are still confined to traditional ways of doing business and Physician marketing is nowhere close to consumer marketing that grew leaps and bounds after companies in the space switched to digital methods and made them an essential tool to reach out to their target audiences. This is where Doceree is making all the difference. It is enabling Pharma brands to use digital technologies by addressing issues that have been acting as a roadblock in digital adoption among Rx drug brands.

- Doceree is integrating doctor-only digital platforms not just in India but across the globe to create a unified and cohesive digital ecosystem
- It is enabling pharmaceutical brands to target doctors at the right moment with the right message to be able to drive behavior change and achieve desired business outcomes.
- It is bringing transparency in 'doctor reach and results' through AI-enabled dashboard.

By being regulatory-compliant, our platform has reduced a lot of hassles related to regulations that Pharma brands faced while partnering with individual digital platforms.

Globally, experts are predicting a promising future for start-ups. Do you expect a cash-positive scenario lately?

When we started Doceree in 2019, we ventured into a space that was very niche, especially in the context of the Indian market. Pharma brands across the globe were not much open to using digital mediums for physician engagement as traditional route of in-person interactions by sales reps still remained the most popular way to connect with physicians. However, the pandemic changed the entire scenario -- sales reps were locked indoors and the only way for pharma organisations to reach out to physicians was through only digital. Around this time, pharma companies realised that digital needed to be more than a checkbox activity in their marketing plans. Our platform turned out to be exactly what pharma brands looked for, providing them complete transparency in accessing physicians through a regulatory compliant medium. Doceree enabled pharma marketers to target physicians contextually at opportune moments, helping them optimise their business outcomes. That we



Doceree is disrupting the Physician marketing landscape much in the same way digital ad networks transformed the consumer marketing space.

have been able to expand to three international geographies – the US, India, UK & Europe in a span of two years shows how critical our platform had been for pharma players. We have been expanding to a new international market every six months and launching various products and features to provide further optimisation capabilities to pharma marketers. Presently, we are working with top 7 out of 10 global pharma players and over 50 publishers throughout the world. Our India business became cash positive in the first 15 months and the US business is expected to become cash positive in the next three months. We are on track to clock projected annual revenue of \$6 million this year.

Would you like to tell us about Doceree's expansion to three international markets – India, US, Europe?

There is no global player in the space right now and our premise is based on creating one.

Irrespective of any market, physician marketing lagged much behind consumer marketing when it comes to digital. While the concept was almost new for Indian pharma marketers, the story was no different even in the developed markets like Europe and America. It is the mental block pertaining to regulations and compliance that had limited the adoption of digital in the pharma industry. This hesitation has now been waning among pharma marketers, especially in India where digital penetration is growing fast in the sector. The concept exists elsewhere in the US, Europe, UK and Japan, but because not much innovation has happened in the space the growth has been very slow. Consumer marketing in the last decade changed the way brands reached out to their target consumer. That kind of transformation did not happen in the pharma marketing space so far, be it any market we talk about. The pandemic though has fuelled the adoption of digital in the industry and marketers are now being more serious about digital pharma marketing tools and strategies. We can say it is now becoming an exciting space across markets. We are introducing products that are specific to a particular market and provide optimisation opportunities to marketers in those markets. The expansion to three international markets is exciting as we are witnessing quite a demand for our platform and our offerings.

What are your growth plans for 2022?

The plan is to expand to Japan next year and come up with market-specific products to cater to the needs of pharma marketers. We will continue doing partnerships in this domain to further optimise the business goals of pharma brands. ●

How Cloud Analytics is Gaining Momentum in the Banking Industry

BFSI is a data-driven industry, which obtains large amounts of data from transaction details, helpline data, log data, emails, social media, external feeds, loan data, sponsorship data, audio recordings, video recordings, among other sources. Many institutions are leveraging data analytics to improve user experience, build multichannel platforms, and focus on client acquisition, consumer buying behaviors, business forecast and retention. Data analytics also assists insurance companies in risk underwriting and uncovering fraudulent insurance claims. Data analytics helps BFSI to understand the target clients better and institutions can now tailor their products and services for the maximum appeal to their customers resulting in customer loyalty.

Leadership today need data driven insights to make changes the ever changing business dynamics. They are all veterans in their space but all of them loves to take scientific approach in business decisions that will pay them great dividends and cloud analytics should ease the stress mounting on business decisions. Data analytics assists firms in analyzing past and current data, forecasting future scenarios with possibilities. Data analytics paired with interactive visualisations aid in creating a unified story from data insights and as a consequence, BFSI companies may improve their goods, boost up-sell and cross-sell opportunities, optimise client retention strategies, streamline documentation, detect fraudulent insurance claims, and much more.

With the use of analytics, banks can keep a look at frauds, better ways of customer acquisition and engagement, and customer targeting. Banks and financial firms can discover trends to improve decision-making and eventually drive corporate success by combining the power of predictive analytics with cutting-edge technology such as artificial



intelligence and machine learning. Cloud Analytics adds value by throwing light on the right amount of data required for businesses to grow. There are numerous types of cloud analytics tools available and here are a few popular ones: **Website Analytics, Sales Analytics, Financial Analytics, Performance Analytics**. BFSI can also leverage below benefits by being on cloud:

1. Centralized and Unified Approach:

With Cloud Analytics, different teams need not manage different databases and analytics tools. Cloud analytics pulled from an organisation's ERP system allows the entire workforce to work on a single source of information and analytics irrespective of their department or location.

2. Breaks Down Isolation: The use of a single system throughout the firm increases collaboration between departments and promotes communication across teams for data usability.

3. Increased Processing: Cloud is operated via powerful servers instead of on-site systems, thus increasing the processing capabilities of the entire organisation.

4. Promotes Collaboration: Cloud is best if used by a bunch of people as it provides a better system for data sharing and collaboration all at the same time. Multiple people can access the same set of documents from across the world without lag and in real-time.

5. Growth and Scalability: With powerful

capabilities such as on-demand scaling up/down and maximum flexibility with no on-site infrastructure set-up requirement, the cloud presents tremendous growth and scalability options at the touch of a button.

6. Cost Reduction: Cost reduction is huge when banks use a single system. Housing and maintaining on-premises systems, including IT, software, and hardware, along with other administrative expenditures, is reduced significantly eventually.

8. Enhanced Security: With regular cloud backups at third party servers located at multiple geographical locations, data security is an event of utmost importance that the cloud carries out seamlessly.

Advanced cloud analytics tools not only process bigger data chunks by using technology like machine learning and artificial intelligence but also helps the C-level executives make predictions using accurate analytical outcomes. Analytics can assist in transforming the digital landscape while ensuring compliance and data security. It is becoming an essential component of financial institution performance and helps drive growth and scalability, improve application performance and optimize IT costs.

Identifying the right cloud services and solutions can be tricky. When choosing the right services partner, banks must examine numerous factors, including strategy, regulatory compliance, technological compatibility, and cybersecurity etc. The challenges are always there and will continue to persist and phoenix always raises in adversities. Begin your organisation with data-driven insights for business growth with Rapyder - a leading Global Cloud Consulting Partner, helping businesses grow and scale at a pace. •

By - Jaykumar Soni, Machine Learning Specialist, Rapyder Cloud Solutions

“AI helps enterprises to reduce their data center energy and emissions by optimising power management”

Edge computing plays an important role in increasing business revenue by employing efficient data transmission speed and strong network support. Large organisations are moving to edge computing solutions to enhance the operational efficiency of their businesses across the globe. Financial services, healthcare, autonomous cars networks, mixed reality, IoT, IIoT, etc; are moving to edge computing. Due to the phenomenal rise in computing demand and a massive increase in data usage, edge computing has reached its pinnacle. **Nidhi Shail Kujur** of **Elets News Network (ENN)** spoke to **Rohit Singal**, VP Sales - India & SAARC, Rahi to learn about how organisations are meeting the demands of today's IT infrastructure with Edge computing.



ROHIT SINGAL

VP Sales - India & SAARC, Rahi

What is the role of artificial intelligence and augmented reality in data center operations?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality (AR) are commonly used in data centers, making them more energy-efficient, thermally optimised, and partial or fully autonomous. AI helps enterprises to reduce their data center energy and emissions by optimising power management. AI can keep track of servers, storage, and networking equipment; ensure that systems are configured correctly and predict when the equipment is headed towards downtime. AI can help in identifying and forecasting data failures by monitoring server performance and network congestion. AI systems can 'learn' how typical network traffic looks through machine learning, identify anomalies

in the data, prioritize which alarms need security experts' attention, assist with post-incident analysis, and provide suggestions for patching vulnerabilities.

AI automation can scale up to analyse huge amounts of data, gathering, critical insights required for minimising energy consumption, spreading workloads, and optimising efficiency to achieve greater data-center resource utilisation. AR can help in real-time data center infrastructure maintenance by allowing onsite workers and engineers to verify live data with a single click from anywhere across the globe with help of the internet. Real-time data can be shown on any device through 3D graphics, and this helps engineers to carry out maintenance work. AI and AR can transform data center architecture and allow for more automated and efficient data management.

How are organisations meeting the demands of today's IT infrastructure with Edge computing?

Edge computing was born to handle an immense amount of data as classic computers were not able to handle the sheer volume of data and its complexities. Edge computing is a distributed computing framework that is used for computation while keeping data storage closer to sources of data. Edge computing has faster accessibility, scalability, enhanced performance, and real-time analytics and insights. With using edge computing, the amount of transmitted data is greatly reduced, decreasing network traffic, and reducing bandwidth use and costs. Edge computing allows a remote server or data center to act independently, irrespective of outages or connectivity to the central data center. Organisations become more agile when edge computing removes the dependency on a central network as the network is not completely shut down. For example, in the case of a cyberattack, the compromised section of the network can be disconnected before the complete network is compromised. Edge computing plays an important role in increasing revenue by enabling businesses with the data transmission speed and network they require to try out new models. Large organisations are moving to edge computing solutions increasingly to enhance the operational efficiency of their businesses across the globe. Financial services, healthcare, autonomous cars networks, mixed reality, IoT, IIoT, etc; are moving to edge computing. Due to an increase in computing demand at the edge and a massive increase in data usage, edge computing has reached its pinnacle.

What are the key components that need to be considered while redesigning the post-pandemic workplace?

Most organisations had to shift to home or remote location models during the pandemic. Now, they're taking a more strategic approach to the back-to-office process and hybrid IT infrastructure. For many organisations, there's no real hurry, since remote work has been so successful, organisations have the luxury of time to plan and pace out the reopening of their offices. Many are taking advantage of this time to rethink their office design. While offices are still operating with



Real-time data can be shown on any device through 3D graphics, and this helps engineers to carry out maintenance work.

a smaller workforce, empty enterprises are making much-needed improvements to their IT environment. It's a great opportunity to elevate the physical IT infrastructure, refresh and upgrade equipment, and improve the audio/visual and collaboration experience.

The following six components are critical for the return-to-work process:

Cabling: Many organisations have older Cat 5E cabling that they've been living with because replacing it is so disruptive. Now's the perfect time to rip out that old infrastructure and install Cat 6 cabling to gain greater performance. Some organisations are even moving to fiber-optic cabling, particularly in their core network infrastructure. Organisations that are moving into smaller office spaces or opening satellite offices need new cabling in those facilities.

Still, others need cabling to run to new "hotel" office spaces and cubicles to support a hybrid work model.

Wi-Fi: Replacing Wi-Fi access points (APs) isn't as troublesome as running physical cabling, but it's still a good project to take on while offices remain empty. Network engineers can upgrade the wireless LAN to the latest Wi-Fi 6 technology and perform heat maps and other tests to ensure adequate coverage and capacity. Many organisations are implementing cloud-based wireless management tools to simplify administration.

Network: By replacing their core network routers and switches, organisations can gain greater performance, reliability, and scalability. They'll have more network ports and bandwidth to provide the capacity needed to meet today's user and application demands. The latest networking gear has the quality-of-service features that improve the user experience, and a streamlined management interface with automation capabilities.

Audio/Visual: A/V equipment is more important than ever with today's hybrid work models. In addition to replacing failed equipment and faded screens, organisations should look at how they use A/V and collaboration technology. Simplified conference room scheduling systems and "one-touch" A/V solutions can increase productivity and user satisfaction. Organisations are also looking to upgrade

image and sound quality for an improved collaboration experience.

Global Standards: Organisations commonly have different IT architectures and equipment in their various offices. The refresh process offers an excellent opportunity to establish global standards for structured cabling, conference room setups, and more. This makes support easier and provides a blueprint for extending the IT environment into new facilities.

Why is there a growing demand for hyper-converged storage solutions from enterprises?

The growing demand for software-defined storage and hybrid cloud has resulted in the growth of hyper-converged storage solutions. The increasing trend of moving toward edge computing has also contributed to the adoption of hyper-converged storage.

Remote working has become the new normal since 2020 and will continue as some organisations have already announced that they will have a part of their workforce permanently work remotely. Hyper-converged storage is perfect for remote working as well as retail settings. It scales down to the need for a public cloud and is extremely cost-effective compared to other storage solutions. Hyper-converged storage can streamline and simplify data storage and IT operations for organisations of all sizes.

Cybersecurity has become a key priority for enterprises today. What are the new security trends that will help in reshaping the industry?

Cyberattacks have increased in the recent past due to digital adoption and with the rise in the number of users going online. 2022 will see an increase in cyberattacks. Below are the security trends to watch out for in 2022.

Rise of ransomware-as-a-service: From the start of the pandemic and later due to the war in Ukraine, there has been a rise in cyber breaches. With more and more people working remotely, the ransomware threat is looming large over organisations. The hackers are taking advantage of vulnerable networks to access and control data. Today, cybercriminals



“Remote working has become the new normal since 2020 and will continue as some organisations have already announced that they will have a part of their workforce permanently working remotely.”

are developing malware to attack enterprise networks and then demand a ransom to release the data. Further, it is important to educate employees about identifying compromised emails and protecting devices from ransomware attacks. Organisations should on a regular basis practice some cybersecurity drills by conducting simulated ransomware activity and sending compromised emails and attachments to employees is a great way to create awareness and alert them. Attachments in phishing emails, mainly Word, Excel, PDFs, and

PowerPoint, may compromise the security of an organisation. Ransomware can be prevented if employees are trained enough to identify and report any malicious activity on the network.

Supply chain attacks: Supply chain attacks are a relatively new but highly effective type of attack that targets software code. Organisations should deploy policies that allow only authorised applications to avoid supply chain attacks. Organisations should also check each application for any vulnerabilities and follow a zero-trust security approach.

Elevated security for cloud adoption: Cloud has become essential in remote and hybrid work environments. A lot of security issues are related to the cloud due to infinite access points that can be attacked easily. Cloud Access Security Brokers (CASBs) will help to remove the risks associated with the cloud environment. The security framework of CASBs is different from that of firewalls and access gateways as they provide.

- Cloud governance, risk assessment, and management
- Increased control over cloud applications and features
- User and entity behavior analytics for threat prevention
- Auditing, data encryption, and malware detection ●

Document Management Software can help banks manage data quantum with confidentiality:

K Bhaskhar, Senior VP, BIS Segment, Canon India

*Transformation and deployment of new technologies is not new to the BFSI industry. However, the outbreak of Covid and its ongoing challenges have definitely accelerated the digitisation journey for the sector. It is during this hyper transition period, collaborative approach is helping the financial institutions navigate through the challenges. To understand how a technology driven company like Canon is offering assistance to the BFSI industry, **K Bhaskhar**, Senior Vice President – BIS Segment, Canon India, interacted with **Elets News Network (ENN)**,*



K BHASKHAR

Senior Vice President – BIS Segment,
Canon India

Covid is helping transform the BFSI industry significantly. How is Canon assisting the sector in its transition?

While the BFSI industry was already transforming and rapidly evolving since the past few years, the COVID-19 pandemic has further fueled a slew of advancements to this segment accentuated by the drive towards digital transformation. The pandemic has caused fundamental shifts in customer behavior, bringing large sectors of the economy online and improving their comfort, experience, and readiness to transact digitally. The need for different strategies around innovation and digital banking is at an all-time high as technology continues to develop, thereby encouraging businesses to support the growing customer expectations and move towards a cashless economy.

Canon has remained at the helm of understanding business requirements to support their seamless transition in today's automated world. Our solutions can be found everywhere from the compliance office to the mailroom. BFSI continues to remain one of our key business verticals for both scanners (document scanners and cheque scanners) and MFDs (multi-function devices), and the sector witnessed a large influx of demand for office automation solutions during both waves of the pandemic. We help financial clients cut the cost of key processes by simplifying and streamlining essential systems, as well as increased automation and digitisation of paper-based administration. With our array of digitisation solutions (document and cheque scanners), curated tools, cloud services, document management solutions (DMS) and multi-functional devices, we are redefining the

digital transformation journey of Banks and Financial Institutions.

How are you supporting the banking and financial industry in dealing with its challenges amid the pandemic and beyond?

COVID-19 has unlocked untapped possibilities for the BFSI sector, eliminating many constraints that they had previously faced in implementing the digital dream. Especially in today's fast-paced environment, thanks to advanced automation solutions, the BFSI sector is better placed to overcome redundancies and manage day-to-day tasks.

Making business simple is the philosophy based on which all our products and technologies are designed. We aim to provide compact, convenient, secure, and reliable solutions to all customers that will improve efficiency and optimise costs.

The BFSI Sector is one of the most important industry verticals for us. Even during the pandemic, as an essential services sector, we saw increase in business from this vertical. With Efficient Digitisation and Secure Document Management as the key asks of this sector, we provide the same through our range of high-speed document scanners which support fast processing of KYC documents, CTS compliant cheque scanners with UV sensors for fraud detection and a wide range of MFD's. Apart from this, we also provide on-premise and cloud document management systems for end-to-end document and workflow management.

What initiatives are you taking to match the increasing demand of office automation and DMS by banks?

In an increasingly competitive market, banks are constantly innovating to differentiate themselves by offering personalised, fast, and secure services to their customers. To mitigate the challenge of managing the huge quantum of data being generated every day, banks prefer to invest in DMS solutions and Canon's advanced offerings can help banks manage this quantum of data while ensuring confidentiality. Our on-premise DMS offering – Therefore™ is best suited for banks because of its security features and its ability to integrate with CRM, ERP and other applications. It can also help streamline workflows thus helping in better operational efficiency across the organisation. It is not only important for banks to capture data, but they should also be able to sort, index

and export documents as fully searchable files to make data interpretations. We offer this value proposition to our customer through our product IRIS Powerscan™.

Would you like to tell us about your best seller Programs and after-sales support to the industry?

As the market leader in the printing segment and a responsible corporate, we have started promoting to every enterprise directly purchasing from us to be a part of a sustainable and green future through our Green Environment Together (GET) initiative. Launched in July 2019, we have planted over 20,000 trees till date across the country. This initiative has received widespread appreciation and support from our customers who view this as a Unique

COVID-19 has unlocked untapped possibilities for the BFSI sector, eliminating many constraints that they previously faced in realising the digital dream.

USP of Canon that while procuring a quality product, they are also contributing to the environment. Apart from this, all our products are developed using advanced technology to reduce the carbon footprint and have an optimum electricity consumption.

After-sales support is one of the most important elements of our relationship with our customers.

Machine up-time is of critical importance in the BFSI sector and by ensuring a maximum uptime of up to 98.5%, our service-support has earned us a lot of accolades from independent research agencies. With a strong service network spanning 1,000+ locations, we ensure the same quality standard of service for all locations. Our endeavor is to prevent problems in our devices, hence the MFDs

come installed with one of a kind software that shares regular updates on the machines health so that preventive measure can be taken.

We have also been ranked in the Top 3 companies holding the highest number of patented technologies in the world for the last 13 years, these technologies have been developed keeping in mind user convenience, security, and cost efficiency.

All these initiatives have contributed towards keeping our customers, delighted always.

What security measures are put in place for Canon's product line-up?

Multi-function devices today are very evolved as they are connected to an organisation's network along with having the capacity to store documents – this makes it extremely critical for MFD's to have adequate security measures in place so that customer data is always protected.

To ensure a secure digital printing experience, our image RUNNER ADVANCE DX MFD series comes with multiple layers of security that provide complete input to output protection. A few features to highlight include McAfee embedded protection – that protects the device from malware/ransomware attacks. HDD Security (HDD Lock, Encryption and Initialise (Erase)) through which data is automatically erased following each print, copy or scan job to ensure all your company's data and information is secure. And Uniflow Online software that keeps a check on what is getting printed and ensures that only print-outs can only be collected by the person who has given the print command.

What is Canon India's roadmap to cater to the sectoral demands?

Our mission is to continue to bring forward new products and new technologies that will help streamline repetitive day to day tasks and bring in increased convenience, efficiency, and productivity in the BFSI sector. Based on industry feedback, we have continued to add more features to our DMS offerings to make it more robust so that workflows are more streamlined. We are also bringing forth solutions that make it easy for the sector to scan, archive, retrieve data as well as make document classification and data extraction easy. Details of our new products/offerings are regularly updated and available on our corporate website. •

Covid proved that competitive advantage cannot be done without technology: **Shobhana Lele, Global CIO, Bombay Dyeing**

*Manufacturing sector has always been a significant part of India's growth story and statistics indicate that the industry played an important role in combating impact of the second Covid-wave. In October 2020, India's manufacturing sector recorded improvement for the third consecutive month, with businesses growing production to the greatest extent in 13 years in the middle of robust sales growth. To understand the changing face of manufacturing industry and the growing role of information and security in the industry, **Elets News Network (ENN)** interacted with **Shobhana Lele**, Global CIO, Bombay Dyeing.*



SHOBHANA LELE
Global CIO, Bombay Dyeing

Covid impacted every sector around the world. What challenges did the manufacturing sector face?

Initially the Manufacturing sector, particularly the non-essential manufacturers, faced a sudden production shutdown. Halt of production activities had a cascading effect on inventories, demand, supply, logistics, cashflow, etc etc.

Added to that, nobody could predict nor reasonably estimate how long it would take for things to come back to normalcy.

After things limped to normalcy a second shutdown was around the corner. While most manufacturing companies work on short and long term forecasts, in this case neither one gave relief or confidence.

Secondly, traditional manufacturing is not capable of being managed remotely. That resulted in halting of operations till people were physically able to return to factories.

These challenges are just to name a few...

How significant is the role of data security in times when digitisation across all industries is at its peak?

Role of Data Security can never be undermined and definitely not when companies are going overboard in digitising their operations. It is easy to overlook or de-prioritise security requirements as their impact is not visible immediately. However, in the long run it can prove to be disastrous and there is no "Undo" for these costly mistakes.

Being a technology leader, what opportunities do you see for the manufacturing industry amidst Covid?

Covid definitely accelerated adoption of technology in the manufacturing sector. It proved beyond doubt that if one has to gain competitive advantage in the market, it cannot be done without technology.

Hence, technologies like RPA, IT, OT and Cloud offer maximum opportunities to the manufacturing sector. All of them have proven use cases, which would help the traditional industries and manufacturers to see the relevance in their domains.

The Global Textile market size is anticipated to reach \$1412.5 Billion by 2028. **What's your opinion on that?**

With a lot of focus on "Made in India", "Self-Reliance" coupled with agriculture, natural resources and skilled talent pool available in India, it is a golden opportunity for textile manufacturers to lead the innovation bandwagon and contribute in making India a global manufacturing hub and exporter that the world looks up to. This is, of course, led by a very robust demand. I reckon it's an excellent time and opportunity.

Which trends & technologies will take the lead in 2022?

Cloud computing will be at the forefront and there will be keen interest in RPA, AI/ML. Agile technologies will continue to drive fast and innovative solutions. Cybersecurity tools will run horizontally across all initiatives.

Lastly, greener technologies will start laying the foundation for the future. ●

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