Sunil Rajguru
sunilr@cybermedia.co.in

"
WE'RE STILL CONTEMPLATING AND VISUALIZING IMPACT OF CHATGPT

Gyan Pandey, Head Digital/ CDO, Voltas Limited (A TATA Enterprise) looks at the differences between various CXO functions and how ChatGPT could disrupt the industry along with its pitfalls. Edited excerpts from a video interview

On the changing role of the CIO-CDO, and the future...

It's very difficult to precisely predict the future, but there has been an evolution and the term CIO, CDO and to some extent the CTO has been used interchangeably. You will find a lot of commonalities in all these roles.

GYAN PANDEY
Head Digital/CDO, Voltas Limited

> CYBERSECURITY HAS BECOME A BOARD ISSUE. TODAY EVERY COMPANY HAS WITHIN THEIR TOP TEN RISKS CYBERSECURITY, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED A SECURITY INCIDENT OR NOT.

If I take the CIO aspect, we all know that it is a more business-centric role. The focus is on leveraging the technology, on helping the business grow and making the process excellent. You also optimize the IT cost just like any other function. Digital is something which has started buzzing for the last 5-7 years. Every CIO has been working on that and the digital transformation journey.

Some of the industry verticals have a dedicated role for the CISO which is mandated by statute, for example the financial sector. But in many cases, you will find the CIO wearing that hat. The Chief Digital Officer in many scenarios is also being played by the CIO. When we say digital with respect to the CIO, it is more about making the processes automated end to end.

Where the organization is more focused on B2C, I think the Chief Digital Officer becomes far more relevant, because then your focus will be heavily on the customer. CDO goes beyond traditional IT. It's more inclined toward innovation and business strategy.

Changes that took place due to the Covid crisis...

Covid has not so good stories if we talk about the society, human or healthcare side. We all have lost some of our near and dear ones. But whenever a problem comes, there is an opportunity to improve. I think in that aspect, we as a country and IT as a function in different verticals and companies, embraced technology. That resulted in a transformation across the industry.

In no time even the change management, which used to be very difficult in terms of technology in any organization, got a focus from the board level to the business survival aspect.

We had challenges on the healthcare front, scarcity of medicines, doctors and beds. Fortunately, on that also transformation took place. We moved to telemedicine, a collaborative approach in the patient interactions and more pharmacy drugs being delivered in a much shorter time.

The same team which used take years to implement certain changes or a project, did it in a few months. That too with great success. In a holistic way, we as a country took a leapfrog in terms of digital transformation.

At the same time there have been a lot of learnings because we accelerated too fast on a terrain which is still not made for that, like IT infrastructure and awareness of the people. We still have a long way to go.

Cybersecurity has become a board issue. Today every company has within their top ten risks cybersecurity, irrespective of whether they have experienced a security incident or not.

The effects of ChatGPT...

ChatGPT is something that has completely swept our thought process. We are still contemplating and visualizing what it can impact. It's not that it's the first of its kind. AI, ML and DL were already there, but ChatGPT

> EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT DIGITAL. BUT THEY STILL FEEL THAT DIGITAL IS MORE ABOUT IT AND ONLY IT MUST DO IT. BUT WHEN THE CIO PLAYS THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, HE OR SHE HAS TO ENSURE THAT DIGITAL CAPABILITY IS NOT ONLY IN IT.

had maturity the moment it was launched. When we look at its primitive use as a conversational search, when you ask a question, it gives the best answer with whatever content is there till 2021.

It's mind blowing. It talks about ethics. It talks about legal compliance. At the same time, looking at its potential, it definitely offers a huge opportunity in terms of business process automation and certain skilled jobs. But there could be wrong usages. It could be used in piracy and data theft. But as it evolves, regulation will also evolve.

Now if one ChatGPT can create such a ripple across the industry and society, imagine similar AI or DL enabled solutions coming in different areas. What could be the use cases and how could life change?

I completely go by (Google CEO) Sundar Pichai's words that the Internet was one thing that revolutionized the world and the way we operate. Now the power of AI is immense, and we cannot even comprehend how much change it can bring.

Advice for a new CIO...

It's not necessary that once you assume the role of a CIO, you start bringing and building a new technology stack within your organization. First you need to understand what your business is and what are the things which IT can help.

Make your housekeeping proper. Put the process in order. Focus on the governance aspect. You should focus more on how you will help businesses in their processes.

Everyone talks about digital. But they still feel that digital is more about IT and only IT must do it. But when the CIO plays the role of digital transformation, he or she has to ensure that digital capability is not only in IT, or with some vendor, it is there in every function and every department.

Make sure that cybersecurity is a part of the process and not a special or a separate project. Everyone should be having awareness about this in the company.

Isolated, technology has no value. Technology is very flexible. If you define your business process on paper with all the exceptions, implementing that in technology is a cakewalk. But if you bring the technology and try to fit the process, it will be a nightmare and many times it will fail.

Last but not the least I will say that always have an eye on what you are spending and what you are getting. Ultimately the business of the business is to do the business and you are also on the function to ensure that all the business functions are being done, in a cost effective way!

(Catch the complete video interview on the Dataquest India YouTube channel) 🔴