VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 | NOVEMBER 2025

Tech Disruptor media.com

techdisruptormedia.com techdisruptormedia

Pg 50
RT COVERAGE
Rewriting the productivity playbook with AI and Gemini

FROM SALES TRAINING TO HYPER-PERSONALIZED PROSPECT ENGAGEMENT:

THE FUTURE OF AI-POWERED SALES PLAYBOOKS

ARUN SUBRAMANIAN

The Man Driving Sales Efficiency Revolution

A BRAND OF BNG
bharatnetworkgroup.com

Elevating Outdoor
Advertising Excellence

Bold Minds
Big Ideas

2nd Edition

Ooh PHOENIX AWARDS

Ooh summit

COMING SOON!
COMING SOON!

Tech Disruptor media.com

Your feedback about this magazine is welcomed at

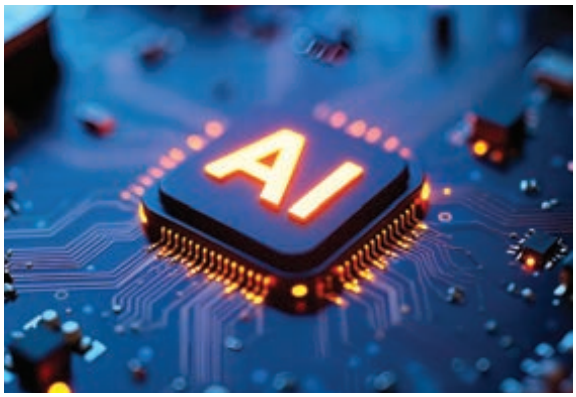
editor@thefoundermedia.com

info@thefoundermedia.com

This magazine is published under/as a part of "HELLO FOUNDER INFOMEDIA PRIVATE LIMITED, an UTTAR PRADESH-based private limited company registered at the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). The Corporate Identification Number (CIN) of HELLO FOUNDER INFOMEDIA PRIVATE LIMITED is U56210UP2023PTC191833 and registration number is U56210UP2023PTC191833. HELLO FOUNDER INFOMEDIA PVT LTD's registered office address is Flat No 1006 10th Floor, Tulip 3 Gulmohar Garden, Raj Nagar Extension, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India, 201017.

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 | NOVEMBER 2025

Table of CONTENT



BHARAT NETWORK GROUP™

FROM THE FOUNDERS' DESK

Ashish Srivastava (L) and Anupam Gupta (R), Founders, Bharat Network Group (BNG)

REINVENTING ENTERPRISE DNA

Dear Prime Reader,

The pace of change in today's business landscape is unlike anything we've seen before. Technology is no longer a support function but has become the foundation on which resilient, intelligent, and future-ready organisations are built.

In this inaugural edition of **Tech Disruptor Media**, we chronicle this evolution and spotlight the leaders driving it.

This edition, released as part of **CIO Horizon 2025**, brings together the vision and voices of CIOs, CISOs, and CTOs who are redefining how enterprises think, operate, and grow.

At **Tech Disruptor Media**, the story of change is just beginning, and the future will be written by those who dare to innovate.

FOREWORD

Dear Prime Reader,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of **Tech Disruptor Media**, a platform born from a single conviction: that technology isn't just a component of business, it is the business of tomorrow.

This first issue arrives beneath the banner of **CIO Horizon 2025**, shining a light on the leaders steering the digital metamorphosis of organisations.

As industries evolve under the weight of AI, data intelligence, cybersecurity, and cloud-native innovation, enterprises are not merely adapting, they are reimagining their future. This edition captures that shift through the lens of visionary CIOs, CISOs, and CTOs who are turning technological disruption into business momentum

Inside, you'll find perspectives on cloud strategy, cybersecurity, data intelligence, innovation at scale, and the human element behind technological change.

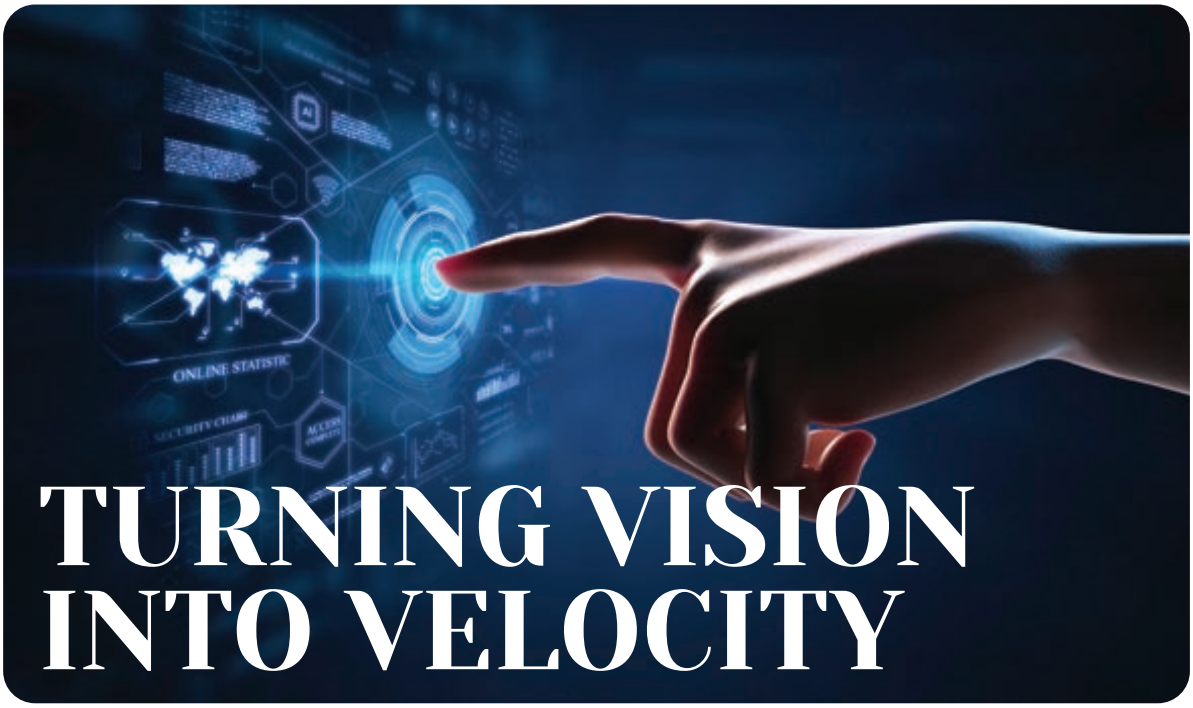
As **Tech Disruptor Media** begins its journey, our mission is simple: to catalyse conversations, elevate ideas, and connect technology with purpose.

Through their perspectives, we aim to inspire bold ideas, strategic thinking, and meaningful conversations that shape the next chapter of digital enterprise

This is only the first step in a much larger story, and we're honoured to write the next chapters together. ■

Vaibhav Kumar
Vice President
Bharat Network Group

> **This first issue arrives beneath the banner of CIO Horizon 2025, shining a light on the leaders steering the digital metamorphosis of organisations**



TURNING VISION INTO VELOCITY

Dear Reader,

In a landscape where technology evolves faster than ever and complexity grows by the day, CIOs, CISOs, and CTOs stand at the helm of enterprise transformation.

Based on this narrative, **Tech Disruptor Media** steps in as more than a magazine and also as the stage for the visionaries shaping tomorrow.

Presenting the inaugural edition of edition of **Tech Disruptor Media**, a platform born from the ambition to chronicle those who are not just navigating change but defining its very course.

This special edition captures their vision, ideas, insights, and bold decisions shaping how organisations operate, compete, and lead in a digital-first world.

Because the future will not be built by those who see technology merely as an enabler, but by those who harness it as a catalyst for reinvention.

Aishwarya Saxena
Sr. Associate Editor
editor@thefoundermedia.com

An inside look at how CIOs, CISOs, and CTOs are rewriting the rules of digital transformation

COVER STORY

FROM SALES TRAINING TO HYPER-PERSONALIZED PROSPECT ENGAGEMENT: THE FUTURE OF AI-POWERED SALES PLAYBOOKS

Arun Subramanian, Co-Founder, Sharpsell.ai, believes the future of sales lies in real-time, AI-powered readiness

Fifteen years ago, when we started building learning simulations for large enterprises, our goal was simple: help salespeople learn how to sell better. But as we shadowed over a thousand salespeople across banks, dealerships, and retail floors, we discovered a deeper truth: salespeople don't struggle because of lack of training, they struggle because they can't access the right story at the right moment.

That realization became the foundation of Sharpsell.ai: India's leading AI-powered Sales Playbook Automation Platform, now empowering over 18.5 lakh frontline sellers across industries to sell smarter, faster, and more confidently.

> **In an age where buyers are more informed, distracted, and digitally savvy, AI becomes the co-pilot that ensures every seller shows up fully prepared**

The evolution: From training simulations to intelligent sales playbooks

The early days of Sharpsell were rooted in sales training simulations: immersive, scenario-based learning that helped CXOs and sales managers experience real-world selling challenges.

But as field teams in banks, dealerships, and insurance branches began using our platform, a pattern emerged: traditional training programs were episodic, while selling was continuous.

A salesperson might forget 80% of what they learned in a classroom, but they always needed quick, contextual help when facing a real customer.

That insight led to the creation of AI-powered sales playbooks: a live, dynamic layer that equips salespeople with everything they need before, during, and after a customer conversation:

- Edge computing and 5G to unlock real-time insights and faster shop-floor de
- Product explainers and need analyzers
- Objection handlers and competitor comparisons
- Personalized video brochures and follow-up collaterals
- Learning bytes and AI-driven quizzes

For example, at one of India's largest banks, over 60,000 Relationship Managers now use Sharpsell's playbooks every day: creating over 3.15 crore personalized presentations a year, representing Rs 46,000 crore in sales value.

The results speak for themselves:

- 56% higher revenue from active users
- 33% lower attrition over two years
- 12% of non-performers turned productive

The AI leap: Roleplays, pitch intelligence, and hyper-personalization

The next leap in our journey came with PitchWiz.ai, our AI-powered Sales Roleplay and Pitch Intelligence engine.

Here, salespeople can practice live conversations with AI personas that simulate real customer moods, contexts, and objections: in English, Hindi, or 10 other regional languages.

A Relationship Manager can now "talk" to an AI

persona that behaves like a 45-year-old busy customer, test their objection handling on-the-fly, and receive instant AI feedback on tone, confidence, and accuracy.

In BFSI, that means a new RM can master complex financial pitches faster.

In Auto or Consumer Durables, a showroom executive can refine their feature storytelling and price justification.

And in FMCG, channel partners can learn how to position schemes more effectively across territories.

This combination of AI-driven practice and AI-driven engagement is redefining readiness: from "training once" to "evolving continuously."

From one-size-fits-all to one-on-one engagement

The real transformation, however, lies in how AI is turning mass selling into hyper-personalized engagement.

Sharpsell's Pitch AI and Sharpsell Voice Agent capabilities allow salespeople to input a customer's goal, risk appetite, or profile: and instantly receive:

- The right product recommendation
- Tailored sales scripts
- Anticipated objections
- Personalized digital collateral (brochure, video, poster, or visiting card)

The outcome?

Every pitch becomes relevant. Every follow-up feels personal. And every interaction builds trust.

In an age where buyers are more informed, distracted, and digitally savvy, AI becomes the co-pilot that ensures every seller shows up fully prepared.

The CIO perspective: Enabling the connected seller

For CIOs across BFSI, Auto, FMCG, and Consumer sectors, the challenge is consistent — how to enable thousands of distributed sellers, channel partners, or relationship managers to deliver a consistent yet contextual experience.

AI-powered Sales Playbooks bridge that gap beautifully.

They plug into existing CRMs, LMS, or dealer management systems, creating a unified experience where every seller can:

- Access approved content and collateral instantly
- Practice with AI roleplays to refine messaging
- Engage customers with personalized digital experiences
- Receive data-driven coaching from their managers

For leadership, Sharpsell provides deep analytics dashboards that highlight adoption, learning progress, engagement quality, and conversion outcomes — ensuring every investment in sales readiness translates to measurable revenue lift.

Human + AI: The future of sales enablement

At Sharpsell, we've always believed that AI should augment the human seller, not replace them. A salesperson's empathy, storytelling, and ability to connect will always be irreplaceable.

But with AI as a co-pilot: guiding, prompting, and personalizing in real time — their potential multiplies.

Whether it's a banker explaining investment options, a dealer pitching a new SUV, or an insurance advisor handling tough objections: AI-powered sales playbooks ensure every seller becomes a trusted advisor.

Closing Thought

The future of sales enablement isn't about training more; it's about transforming every interaction into a moment of intelligence.

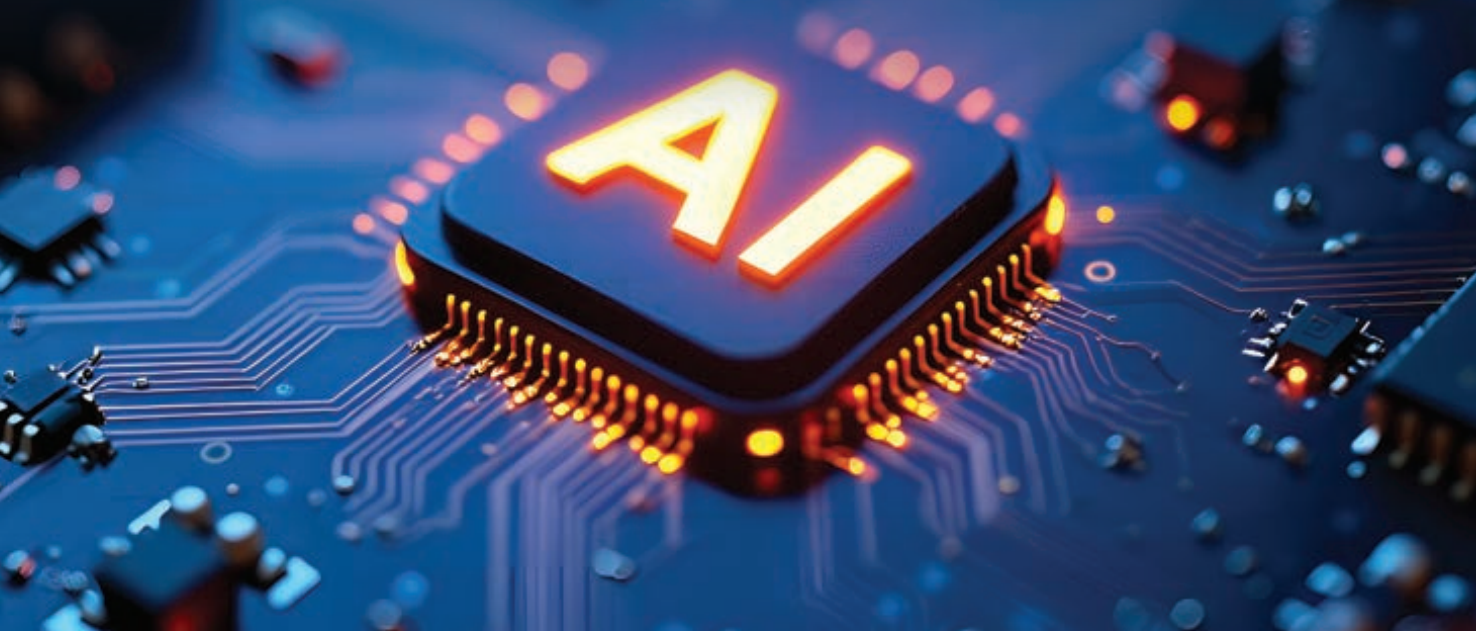
As AI continues to learn from millions of frontline conversations, we are getting closer to a world where every seller speaks the right story, in the right language, at the right moment — consistently.

That's not just the future of sales technology. That's the future of humanized, hyper-personalized prospect engagement.

INDUSTRY STORY

INSIDE INDIA'S AI LANDSCAPE: WHAT CIOS ARE PRIORITISING IN 2025

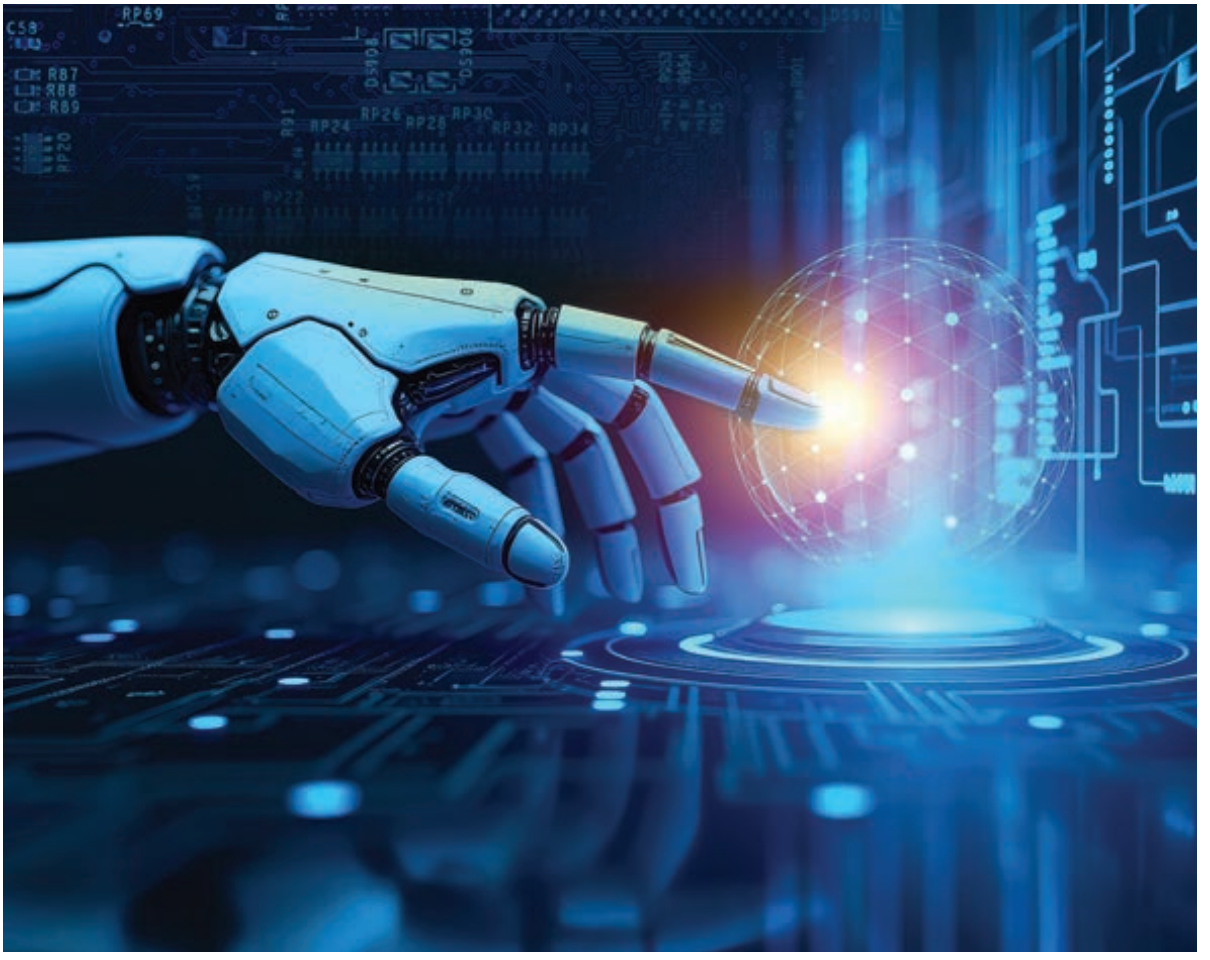
As Indian enterprises evolve their AI strategies, **Aishwarya Saxena** engaged with **Meheriar Patel, GCTO & Director-IT, Master Group, Anand Kumar Sinha, CIO** and **Global Head IT, Birla Soft; Sushma Chopra, Global Lead – Emerging Tech Innovations CoE, Mondelez International, Rasvinder Singh Nagpal, Lead – IT Infrastructure, Sumitomo Chemical India, Kunal Dikshit, CTO, Federal Bank Financials, Shobhana Lele, CIO, Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company Ltd. and Anand Deodhar, GCIO, Force Motors** who shared their insights on the shift from pilots to scalable impact, highlighting strategy, governance, and long-term value creation as key enablers



Indian enterprises are no longer asking if AI matters but are deciding how fast to scale it. India's AI story is a layered transition. According to our recent survey titled, 'AI Readiness & Adoption Insights', the data shows that 45 per cent of organisations remain in early exploration, 25 per cent are running pilots and proofs of concept, and 30 per cent have moved into enterprise-wide rollouts.

This mix captures a market that is shifting from curiosity to capability, while maturity still varies by sector and function.

Building on this momentum, **Meheriar Patel, GCTO & Director-IT, Master Group elucidates**, "The current state of AI in logistics remains mostly pilot-driven, with companies focusing on proof-of-concept projects like route optimization, demand forecasting, and warehouse automation, often limited to specific functions such as fleet management or customer service. Integration remains a key hurdle due to legacy systems, fragmented data, and limited real-time visibility, while cultural resistance, low AI literacy, and lack of leadership commitment beyond innovation teams further slow adoption. Measuring ROI is difficult in the early stages, and high implementation costs compared to manpower make scaling challenging. To achieve enterprise-wide impact, organisations need to shift from technology-led pilots to business-driven transformation by building unified data ecosystems, ensuring interoperability, and using modular, API-based platforms that integrate with existing systems. AI should be positioned as a strategic business enabler,



> We are currently in the pilot phase for implementing AI across our IT and OT systems in the plants. The good news is we're seeing success with focused applications, such as predictive maintenance

MEHERIAR PATEL
GCTO & Director-IT, Master Group

supported by workforce upskilling and collaboration, with success measured not by deployment numbers but by outcomes such as reduced delivery times, improved efficiency, cost savings, and enhanced customer experience."

Efficiency meets experience with AI

The clearest momentum sits where efficiency and customer promise meet. AI is most actively applied to operations and process automation at 70 per cent and to customer experience and engagement at 65 per cent, with cybersecurity and threat detection at 50 per cent close behind.

Sales and marketing intelligence contributes at 40 per cent, supply chain and logistics optimisation at 35 per cent, and workforce management at 30 per cent. These figures show AI being used to shorten cycle times, improve accuracy, raise service quality, and strengthen risk controls, often within the same programmes.

Based on these figures, **Anand Kumar Sinha, CIO and Global Head IT, Birla Soft** says, "The early challenges like integrating pilots, aligning stakeholders, and proving ROI against legacy systems, have revealed where the real transformation begins. We're beyond experimentation; we're at the threshold of a full-scale

> **"The early challenges like integrating pilots, aligning stakeholders, and proving ROI against legacy systems, have revealed where the real transformation begins. We're beyond experimentation; we're at the threshold of a full-scale enterprise reinvention**
>
> **ANAND KUMAR SINHA**
> CIO and Global Head IT, Birla Soft

> **“The AI landscape is currently defined by exploration and pilot programs and struggles with demonstrable ROI. The path forward demands a strategic pivot towards fewer, high-impact AI initiatives that deliver significant, measurable value and are transformational in nature**
>
> **SUSHMA CHOPRA**
> Global Lead - Emerging Tech Innovations CoE, Mondelez International

enterprise reinvention. The next phase won’t be defined by how we use AI, but by how we rebuild around it, embedding intelligence, adaptability, and autonomy into the core of every process. This shift demands more than new technology; it requires a cultural evolution. The organizations that succeed will be those that move beyond augmentation and embrace autonomous, AI-native operating models, where decisions, workflows, and innovation are continuously driven by intelligent systems at scale.”

Stack that enables results

Adoption patterns are pragmatic. Predictive analytics and business forecasting lead usage at 80 per cent, which gives leaders forward looking visibility on demand, risk, and operations. Intelligent automation that combines RPA with AI follows at 65 per cent, signalling a shift from task execution to decision support.

Generative AI is emerging primarily for knowledge and content management at 35 per cent, while data governance and compliance monitoring appear at 30 per cent, fraud detection and financial risk modelling at 25 per cent, and personalised offerings at 20 per cent. These choices reflect a push to operationalise AI safely and at scale.

Sushma Chopra, Global Lead - Emerging Tech Innovations CoE, Mondelez International explains, "The AI landscape is currently defined by exploration and pilot programs and struggles with demonstrable ROI. The path forward demands a strategic pivot towards fewer, high-impact AI initiatives that deliver significant, measurable value and are transformational in nature. This requires embedding AI into the very fabric of the organization, supported by an enterprise-wide AI strategy, availability of data, cultivating AI talent and a commitment to responsible AI frameworks. Organizations that embrace this shift from experimentation to strategic integration will be the ones reaping tangible rewards, leaving dabblers behind in the initial frenzy."

Rewiring business for AI success

When CIOs anchor AI to business goals, priorities become clear. Improving operational efficiency is the leading objective at 45 per cent, followed by enhancing customer experience at 30 per cent. Reducing costs and optimising resources stands at 15 per cent, and strengthening cybersecurity and risk mitigation stands at 10 per cent. Taken together, these priorities explain why the most successful programmes

> **"We are currently in the pilot phase for implementing AI across our IT and OT systems in the plants. The good news is we're seeing success with focused applications, such as predictive maintenance**
>
> **RASVINDER SINGH NAGPAL**
> Lead- IT Infrastructure,
> Sumitomo Chemical India

blend reliability in daily operations with distinctive customer outcomes.

Adding perspective to this strategic shift, **Rasvinder Singh Nagpal, Lead- IT Infrastructure, Sumitomo Chemical India** notes, “We are currently in the pilot phase for implementing AI across our IT and OT systems in the plants. The good news is we're seeing success with focused applications, such as predictive maintenance. We've hit the familiar roadblocks: integrating with our legacy systems, achieving cultural alignment across teams, and precisely defining our Return on Investment. To scale this success company-wide, our next move can't be more small projects. We must pivot to rethinking entire workflows and executing a massive upskilling effort for our workforce. The bottleneck for AI is shifting from capability to complexity. To move beyond pilots, organisations must stop 'bolting on' AI and start 'rewiring' the business. That means tackling legacy integration head-on and defining ROI not just by efficiency, but by fundamental problem-solving.”

GenAI adoption still in infancy

The survey places Generative AI in early but unmistakable motion. 15 per cent are considering or implementing, 40 per cent are in early discussions, 35 per cent plan to explore, and 10 per cent do not see it as a priority at present.

> **“Adoption in Financial industry is still in infancy. We do have successful use cases in terms early warning of fraud, risk control, credit scoring, delinquency prediction etc but a lot more needs to be done in terms of making it ready for large scale adoption**
>
> **KUNAL DIKSHIT**
> CTO, Federal Bank Financials

The adoption curve suggests that organisations are sequencing GenAI after foundational prediction and automation, beginning with knowledge management, content operations, and employee enablement where policy, provenance, and safety can be governed centrally.

Commenting on this evolving landscape, **Kunal Dikshit, CTO, Federal Bank Financials** comments, "Adoption in Financial industry is still in infancy. We do have successful use cases in terms early warning of fraud, risk control, credit scoring, delinquency prediction etc but a lot more needs to be done in terms of making it ready for large scale adoption. AI models need to be free of biases / hallucinations, for which input data has to be of good quality. Regulator clarity and collaboration is needed to make it more affordable and mainstream. Innovative thinking in terms of ROI calculation would help in taking it to the next level."

Constraints that decide winners

Leaders are direct about what slows scale. A shortage of skilled talent is cited at 60 per cent, integration with existing systems at 55 per cent, and cultural and change management hurdles at 50 per cent. High cost of

> **"There is a great amount of interest in a number of use cases, some of them could be as basic as language and translation skills and could go into complex ones like predictive analytics**
>
> **SHOBHANA LELE**
> CIO, Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company Ltd.

> **I see AI integration still in its infancy, marked by pilots and cautious experimentation. The real challenge lies in harmonising technology with legacy systems and workforce culture**

ANAND DEODHAR
GCIO, Force Motors

adoption is noted at 45 per cent, data privacy and compliance concerns at 40 per cent, unclear ROI at 35 per cent, and legacy infrastructure at 30 per cent.

These realities show that AI success depends as much on people and plumbing as it does on models. Programmes that budget for integration, data quality, security, and enablement alongside algorithms move faster and reduce risk.

Shobhana Lele, CIO, Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company Ltd. says, "There is a great amount of interest in a number of use cases, some of them could be as basic as language and translation skills and could go into complex ones like predictive analytics. What will really drive successful adoption is tools which come embedded with AI functionality - this will make it easier for the ecosystem to attempt outcome-based initiatives and also offer better ROI."

Intelligence becomes the new automation standard

The directional trend is consistent. Organisations are evolving from RPA pilots to decision systems that apply AI to real operations. Cybersecurity and data governance are rising from compliance tasks to strategic capabilities.

Generative AI pilots are

appearing fastest in content management, customer engagement, and employee enablement, and adoption is growing across business functions rather than in isolated proofs of concept. Together, these shifts point to an intelligence fabric that spans processes, platforms, and policies.

Expressing his thoughts on AI, **Anand Deodhar, GCIO, Force Motors** adds, "I see AI integration still in its infancy, marked by pilots and cautious experimentation. The real challenge lies in harmonising technology with legacy systems and workforce culture. The next leap will come when AI is embedded into core operations, driving measurable outcomes and fostering a mindset of continuous innovation."

What resilient execution looks like

CIOs express optimism about AI's potential and pair it with a practical call for structure. They point to a deliberate roadmap to move from experimentation to scale, sustained investment in talent and change, and clearer ROI metrics for board level sponsorship.

In practice, this means designing for production at the outset, including data contracts, identity, policy, and observability, so that pilots graduate into governed and reliable services rather than staying impressive demonstrations.

In short, the survey reveals a market that has moved beyond the noise of hype and into the reality of execution. Ambition alone is no longer a differentiator as real advantage will belong to the organisations that transform pilots into scalable platforms, deliver measurable gains in efficiency and experience, embed governance at every layer, and build teams capable of integrating AI into the core of the business rather than simply imagining its potential.

INTERVIEW

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH THROUGH STRATEGIC DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

From architecting enterprise-wide digital transformation strategies to embedding AI-driven innovation across global operations, **Anand Kumar Sinha, CIO & Global Head IT, Birlasoft,** shares with **Aishwarya Saxena** his vision for building resilient, secure, and future-ready organisations

Can you share your approach to developing and executing a digital transformation strategy that aligns with the organisation's long-term business goals?

A digital transformation strategy must be tightly aligned with the business vision. My approach begins with engaging business leaders to identify value streams and strategic goals, be it revenue growth, operational efficiency, or customer experience. From there, I build a phased roadmap that establishes a solid foundation, cloud adoption, ERP modernisation, and a robust data strategy, before scaling into automation, AI, and advanced analytics. Regular checkpoints and KPI-based governance ensure that every initiative drives measurable business impact.

> **Innovation thrives in a culture that encourages experimentation. I promote a 'fail-fast, learn-fast' mindset through innovation labs, hackathons, and cross-functional squads**

Our notable success was deploying a GenAI-powered HR bot (B-Hive), which helped resolving 94% of HR queries instantly and significantly enhancing the employee experience and allowing HR teams to focus on strategic initiatives

How do you manage change and overcome resistance within the organisation during large-scale digital transformation initiatives?

Change often faces resistance because it disrupts established ways of working. To overcome this, I emphasise early communication, stakeholder involvement, and creating 'change champions' across departments. Training programs, skill-building workshops, and celebrating small wins help employees see both personal and organisational benefits. By embedding transparency and trust, resistance can be turned into advocacy.

What role do data integration and quality play in an organisation's IT operations, and how do you ensure consistency across diverse enterprise systems?

Data is the foundation of informed decision-making. Inconsistent or poor-quality data leads to flawed insights and operational inefficiencies. I advocate for a unified data governance framework with clearly defined ownership, master data management, and automated quality checks. Using APIs, data lakes, and integration platforms, we connect diverse enterprise systems and ensure a single source of truth across the organisation.

Given your extensive experience, what cybersecurity frameworks and practices have you found most effective in protecting an organisation's global IT infrastructure?

Cybersecurity is no

longer optional, it must be embedded at every layer of IT. I have found frameworks such as Zero Trust Architecture, NIST, and ISO 27001 highly effective. To bring them to life, practices like continuous monitoring, identity and access management, encryption, and regular red/blue team simulations are critical. For global operations, compliance with local regulations such as GDPR and HIPAA is equally important, supported by strong business continuity and disaster recovery planning.

Could you provide an example of a successful automation or AI-driven project implemented under your leadership, and its impact on business operations?

By adopting an AI-first approach, we are accelerating digital transformation, streamlining operations, and driving measurable business growth with agility and resilience. Our notable success was deploying a GenAI-powered HR bot (B-Hive), which helped resolving 94% of HR queries instantly and significantly enhancing the employee experience and allowing HR teams to focus on strategic initiatives. In parallel, we integrated automation workflows directly into ServiceNow.

This initiative targeted high-volume, routine tickets, and we successfully automated over 73% of resolutions for issues based on standard operating procedures (SOPs) and common awareness-related queries. This freed up our support teams, accelerated resolutions, and markedly improved IT service delivery. These projects, along with implementing AI-driven predictive analytics in IT operations, have delivered direct productivity gains and measurable cost savings.

How do you foster a culture of innovation and collaboration within your IT teams, especially across multiple geographies?

Innovation thrives in a culture that encourages experimentation. I promote a "fail-fast, learn-fast" mindset through innovation labs, hackathons, and cross-functional squads. Recognition of contributions and sharing global success stories strengthen engagement. Agile practices and collaboration platforms bridge geographical gaps, creating a shared sense of purpose and empowering teams worldwide to innovate and collaborate effectively. ■

editor@thefoundermedia.com

INTERVIEW

INNOVATION WITH INTEGRITY: BUILDING SECURE & SCALABLE TECH ECOSYSTEMS

As enterprises undergo continuous reinvention, **Ravi Shankar Srivastava, CIO, Patanjali Foods**, speaks to **Aishwarya Saxena** about driving sustainable innovation, balancing modernisation with legacy systems, and redefining the role of the CIO

Which emerging technologies do you believe hold significant transformative potential that is not yet fully recognised by the industry?

Some technologies are quietly reshaping industries but have not yet received widespread recognition. Neuromorphic computing, for instance, mimics the human brain's architecture, enabling faster and more energy-efficient AI. Though still in its early stages, it could revolutionise edge computing and robotics. Similarly, digital twins in enterprise IT, commonly used in manufacturing, are underexplored for simulating entire IT ecosystems to enable predictive maintenance and cyber resilience.

Another promising area is decentralised identity (DID), which offers secure, user-controlled identity management and could redefine authentication and access control as privacy concerns grow. AI-driven code generation and refactoring tools are also making strides beyond existing solutions like Copilot, with the potential to autonomously optimize legacy codebases and drastically reduce technical debt. Additionally, quantum networking, distinct from quantum computing, could transform data-sensitive industries through quantum-secure communication.

Could you share some approaches or philosophies that have

“With the growing sophistication of cyber threats and increasing regulatory scrutiny, CIOs are prioritising a range of proactive measures to safeguard data

helped you maintain relevance and adaptability in a landscape of rapidly evolving technology trends?

Adaptability in the fast-paced technology landscape relies on cultivating the right mindset and systems. The philosophy of "learn, unlearn, relearn" has been invaluable, encouraging openness to discard outdated paradigms. Regular "tech radar" reviews involving cross-functional teams help assess emerging tools and frameworks to ensure readiness for future trends. Reverse mentoring, where leaders learn from younger professionals, offers fresh perspectives on grassroots innovations and evolving user behaviour.

Scenario planning also plays a key role, preparing for multiple plausible futures rather than betting on one. Additionally, active community engagement through forums, advisory boards, and innovation councils provides insight into real-world challenges and evolving industry solutions.

Reflecting on guidance received from mentors, are there any pieces of advice that have particularly shaped your outlook on technology leadership?

Over the years, several pieces of mentorship advice have profoundly influenced my approach to technology leadership. One memorable lesson is, "Don't chase technology—chase outcomes," which reframes technology adoption around delivering business value rather than following trends. Another guiding principle has been, "Be the translator between business and tech," emphasising the importance of bridging these two worlds effectively.

A mentor once advised me to "hire for curiosity, not just competence," a philosophy that has proven critical in building innovative teams driven by the urge to explore and improve. Lastly, a powerful reminder that "your job isn't to know everything—it's to ask the right questions" has been a constant in navigating

leadership responsibilities amidst rapidly changing technologies.

How would you compare the process of adapting to emerging technologies today with your experiences integrating previous generations of technology?

The shift between past and present technology integration is stark. Earlier generations of integration were slower, heavily hardware-centric, and often functioned in silos. Change management followed a linear process and required substantial manual oversight. In contrast, today's landscape, defined by cloud-native, API-first, and composable architectures, demands agility and constant iteration. Integration is no longer a one-time effort but a continuous process.

The most notable difference lies in the fact that today's rapid pace and scale of change require not just technical upgrades but also deep cultural transformation within organizations to truly embrace innovation.

Which aspects of the technology landscape do you find persistently challenging, and how do you approach these hurdles within your organization?

Certain challenges in the technology ecosystem continue to persist despite advances. Legacy systems remain a major concern, requiring a careful balance between modernisation and business continuity. The talent gap in areas like cybersecurity, AI/ML, and cloud-native development also poses difficulties. Additionally, shadow IT, where unsanctioned tools are used within organisations, can create risks even as it fosters innovation. Change fatigue among employees due to constant transformation efforts is another recurring issue.

To address these challenges, a modular modernisation strategy is adopted to break down legacy systems into manageable upgrades. Internal tech evangelism is encouraged to promote awareness and reduce resistance through education and training. Governance frameworks are established to enable innovation while maintaining security and compliance.

Legacy systems remain a major concern, requiring a careful balance between modernisation and business continuity

Given rising concerns around data protection, what kinds of measures are CIOs prioritizing to strengthen organisational information security?

With the growing sophistication of cyber threats and increasing regulatory scrutiny, CIOs are prioritising a range of proactive measures to safeguard data. Zero Trust Architecture, which operates on the principle of "never trust, always verify," is becoming a new standard. Data classification and encryption are being strengthened to ensure sensitive data is protected both at rest and in transit.

The use of AI-driven threat detection systems is also gaining traction, enabling real-time anomaly identification through machine learning. Furthermore, the concept of privacy-by-design is being embedded into product development to ensure compliance from the start. Lastly, rigorous third-party risk management practices are being emphasized to ensure vendors and partners adhere to the same high standards of data protection. ■

editor@thefoundermedia.com

INTERVIEW

DIGITAL TWINS AND AI DRIVING A NEW AGE OF INDUSTRIAL EXCELLENCE

Sanjay Mishra, Chief Digital & Information Officer, Jindal Stainless Limited tells **Aishwarya Saxena** on how the company is reimagining manufacturing by embracing digital transformation, leveraging AI and Industry 4.0 to boost operational excellence, foster innovation, and shape a smarter, sustainable future

What were the primary challenges and strategic objectives behind launching Project Pragati and how has the adoption of digital twins accelerated your manufacturing transformation?

Historically, stainless steel production has been an asset-intensive process, with limited visibility into its complex operations. At Jindal Stainless, we wanted to change that by combining our decades of metallurgical expertise with modern digital capabilities to improve predictability, efficiency, and resilience. With this in mind, we launched Project Pragati at our manufacturing plants with two clear objectives: driving operational excellence and enabling sustainable growth.

Digital twins have been a game-changer. They create a real-time virtual replica of our critical processes and assets. In simpler terms, when a customer places an order, Pragati automatically identifies the most optimal fulfilment route in real-time, either by intelligently allocating from existing inventory or by scheduling production at any phase of the manufacturing process, from casting to finishing, while considering the quickest and most efficient path to meet the demand. This allows our

> **Technology has moved us from hindsight to foresight, empowering teams to make proactive decisions that directly improve throughput, quality, and safety**

AI isn't just a technological upgrade; it's a strategic enabler that will keep our industry competitive in the global market

team to simulate, optimise, and predict outcomes before making changes on the shop floor. This has accelerated decision-making, minimised downtime, and set new benchmarks for productivity.

Most importantly, it has laid a scalable foundation for Industry 4.0, which involves the integration of digital technologies into manufacturing processes and aims to create smart factories where digital and physical systems collaborate seamlessly, across our plants.

How have virtual twin technologies and real-time process digitisation reshaped day-to-day operations at your manufacturing facilities?

Virtual twins and digitisation have made operations far more transparent and data-driven. Our operators can now monitor processes in real time and receive predictive alerts before issues escalate, while maintenance has shifted from reactive to predictive, significantly reducing unplanned downtime. Engineers can experiment virtually, reducing risk and rolling out improvements faster.

In short, technology has moved us from hindsight to foresight, empowering teams to make proactive decisions that directly improve throughput, quality, and safety.

Where do you see the greatest value from AI, advanced analytics, or robotics in the stainless-steel making process thus far, and what remains aspirational?

AI isn't just a technological upgrade; it's a strategic enabler that will keep our industry competitive in the global market and help us become safer, smarter, and more sustainable.

The greatest value so far has come from predictive analytics in equipment reliability, yield optimisation, and energy efficiency, along with AI-powered quality control. Robotics is already improving safety

in inspection and material handling.

What remains aspirational is the deployment of self-learning AI systems that can autonomously optimise entire value chains, as well as robotics at scale for hazardous, high-temperature environments. At Jindal Stainless, we are steadily moving in that direction, though integration with legacy systems and scaling adoption continue to be areas of active focus.

How do you balance technology investment with aggressive decarbonisation goals in the stainless steel sector? Which hurdles remain?

From my perspective, digital transformation and decarbonisation are not two separate goals, they are deeply interconnected. Digital technologies allow us to measure, track, and optimise energy consumption and emissions in real time. For example, advanced analytics helps reduce energy intensity, while digital twins let us test decarbonisation strategies virtually before implementation on ground.

The biggest hurdles are scaling up the green energy availability, improving the cost competitiveness of emerging clean technologies, and retrofitting older assets. Addressing these challenges will require collective action, through partnerships, collaboration across industries, and supportive policy frameworks that accelerate adoption.

Based on your experience driving such an ambitious change program, what advice would you give other legacy manufacturers looking to become digitally and sustainably future proof?

My advice would be threefold. First, start with the business problem, not the technology. Technology is an enabler of strategy, not the strategy itself.

Second, invest in people and culture as much as in tools. Transformation succeeds only when the workforce embraces it. Even the most advanced technology will have little impact if it isn't actively adopted and integrated into daily operations.

Thirdly, think ecosystem. Partner with startups, academia, and technology providers because transformation is not possible in isolation. Remember, transformation is not a sprint. Quick wins build momentum, but true resilience comes from sustained focus and a long-term view.

Which emerging technologies or trends do you believe will define the future of manufacturing over the next decade?

The next decade of manufacturing will be defined by:

- AI-driven autonomous operations that optimise end-to-end value chains.
- Green hydrogen and circular economy technologies that decarbonise stainless steel at scale.
- Industrial metaverse and AR/VR for immersive training, remote operations, and collaboration.
- Edge computing and 5G to unlock real-time insights and faster shop-floor decision-making.

The future of manufacturing will be smart, efficient, sustainable, and more importantly, human centric. At Jindal Stainless, we are committed to playing a leading role in shaping that future.■

editor@thefoundermedia.com

INTERVIEW

BUILDING THE FUTURE WITH INDUSTRY 4.0 AND SMART INNOVATION

Ninad Raje, Group CIO, Jaquar & Co., in conversation with **Aishwarya Saxena**, shares how the company is leveraging Industry 4.0, digital supply chains, and smart-home innovations to transform manufacturing, enhance customer experience, and build an intelligent, future-ready enterprise

What digital tools or process improvements have been most effective in reducing manufacturing cost, improving yield or reducing defects?

At Jaquar, we have invested heavily in Industry 4.0 technologies to drive operational excellence. Our manufacturing units use advanced IoT-enabled sensors and real-time data analytics for process monitoring, predictive maintenance, and quality control. By integrating our shop-floor machines with Manufacturing Execution System (MES), we have reduced wastage, optimised machine utilisation, and significantly improved first-pass yield. Automated quality inspection systems using vision analytics have further lowered defect rates and rework costs.

How do you ensure consistency of customer experience across online channels, showrooms, and physical service?

Consistency begins with a unified digital backbone. We have implemented an omnichannel customer engagement platform that integrates our e-commerce portals, showrooms, and after-sales service

> **"We are building open APIs and interoperable platforms so our solutions can integrate seamlessly with leading smart-home ecosystems**

channels. Customer profiles, purchase history, and service records are maintained in a single CRM ecosystem, ensuring personalised interactions at every touchpoint. Our showroom teams are equipped with digital tools that mirror our online experience, product configurators, visualisation, and real-time inventory visibility, allowing customers to seamlessly move between digital and physical experiences without losing context.

What kind of process digitisation has been implemented in support functions like inventory, procurement, supply chain, maintenance and how has that helped reduce cost or time?

Jaquar has digitised its entire supply chain from end to end. Our ERP backbone integrates procurement, inventory, logistics, and vendor management in real time. Automated demand forecasting helps us plan production more accurately, reducing overstock and stock-outs. We have deployed digital maintenance management systems to schedule preventive maintenance for our plants, cutting unplanned downtime. Vendor portals and e-procurement have streamlined supplier collaboration, shortened procurement cycles, and reduced administrative overheads.

Our ERP backbone integrates procurement, inventory, logistics, and vendor management in real time

How is Jaquar preparing for the future of smart homes and IoT becoming more integrated, especially in bathroom & lighting solutions?

We see smart homes as a key driver of innovation

in our industry. Our R&D and digital teams are working together to embed IoT capabilities into our bathroom and lighting products, from app-controlled fittings and automated lighting scenarios to energy-efficient, sensor-based water management systems. We are building open APIs and interoperable platforms so our solutions can integrate seamlessly with leading smart-home ecosystems. Security, privacy, and ease of use are at the core of our product design philosophy.

What is Jaquar Group's digital transformation roadmap for the next 3-5 years, especially in how it impacts product design, customer experience, and operations?

Our 3–5-year digital roadmap focuses on three pillars:

Smart Product Innovation: Embedding IoT, AI, and sustainability-driven features into our product portfolio.

Jaquar has digitised its entire supply chain from end to end. Our ERP backbone integrates procurement, inventory, logistics, and vendor management in real time

End-to-End Customer Experience: Expanding our omnichannel capabilities with immersive digital experiences such as AR/VR product visualisation, virtual consultations, and data-driven personalisation.

Intelligent Operations: Moving towards a fully connected enterprise where manufacturing, supply chain, and service are driven by real-time data, predictive insights, and automation.

We are also investing in advanced analytics and digital twins for product design and operational efficiency, while strengthening our cybersecurity and data governance frameworks. This roadmap ensures Jaquar remains ahead of the curve in technology, quality, and customer delight. ■

editor@thefoundermedia.com

VIEWPOINT

HOW TECHNOLOGY, DIGITAL, AND AI CAN TRANSFORM RURAL INDIA

Atul Pandey, Director – IT & Digital, Bharat Network Group, highlights how India's digital future depends on empowering its villages through AI-driven inclusion and rural innovation

INDIA'S TRUE strength lies in its villages, where more than 65% of our population resides. These rural heartlands are not just the backbone of our economy but also the soul of our nation, rich in culture, tradition, and untapped potential. Yet, while our cities are rapidly adopting advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation, and data-driven systems, many villages still struggle with limited digital access, poor connectivity, and low awareness.

This digital divide has created two different India — one thriving in the age of AI, cloud, and analytics, and another still waiting for basic connectivity. If India truly wants to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth, we must bridge this gap. Technology should not remain an urban privilege; it must become a rural right.

The next phase of India's digital revolution will not be defined merely by how advanced our cities become, but by how empowered our villages are — how we use AI, data, and digital innovation to solve local problems, create jobs, and unlock opportunities. As an IT and Digital Director, I see a massive opportunity for rural transformation through technology - not just as an enabler of convenience, but as a catalyst for equality, empowerment, & economic independence. However, achieving this vision requires long-term commitment, investment, and strong collaboration between the government, private sector, and local communities.

> **The next phase of India's digital revolution will not be defined merely by how advanced our cities become, but by how empowered our villages are**

Strengthening digital infrastructure

The backbone of digital transformation is connectivity. Affordable and reliable internet must reach every village. Fiber networks, 5G towers, and satellite internet can ensure no village is left behind. Just as roads connected rural India in the last century, digital highways will connect them in this century.

(a) Policy actions to accelerate connectivity

- Expand BharatNet Phase III to ensure gigabit-speed broadband to every Gram Panchayat.
- Provide tax incentives for telecom companies to set up 5G and satellite infrastructure in remote areas.
- Launch a 'Digital Grameen Mission' to deploy solar-powered Wi-Fi hotspots and shared digital kiosks.
- Encourage state-run digital infrastructure funds to co-invest with private players.
- Build AI-powered network monitoring systems to detect connectivity gaps in real time and optimise bandwidth in rural clusters.

AI-enabled E-governance & digital services

Villagers often travel long distances for basic government services. By promoting digital seva kendras, mobile apps, and vernacular-language platforms, we can ensure schemes, subsidies, and essential services reach citizens directly at their doorstep.

(b) Steps government can implement

- Introduce a 'One Nation, One Digital Portal' integrating all rural welfare schemes in local languages.
- Use AI-driven chatbots on WhatsApp and IVR to guide citizens through forms and schemes in their native language.
- Deploy machine learning models to predict which regions need targeted benefits (fertilizer subsidy, health schemes, etc.).
- Simplify digital identity verification through facial recognition, voice-based Aadhaar, and document scanning.
- Build AI dashboards for district administrators to track service delivery and identify bottlenecks automatically.

AI in digital education & skilling

Every rural child deserves quality education. Digital classrooms, tablets, and AI-based learning tools can bridge the gap between rural and urban education. Alongside, rural youth need digital skills like basic coding, online business training, and cyber awareness so they can become part of the global workforce.

(c) Public initiatives to bridge learning divide

- Establish 'Digital Vidyalaya' hubs with smart classrooms and low-cost AI tutors that provide personalised learning paths.
- Provide AI-curated learning content in local languages tailored to each child's progress level.
- Partner with EdTech firms to offer adaptive learning platforms for government schools.
- Launch a National Rural AI Literacy Mission focused on coding, robotics, generative AI, and data analytics.
- Introduce AI-powered career guidance platforms for rural students to discover opportunities in tech, design, and entrepreneurship.

Smart & AI-driven agriculture

Farmers form the backbone of rural India. Technology can empower them through weather forecasting apps, soil health monitoring, drone-based farming, and direct-to-consumer e-commerce platforms. AI can take this further by predicting crop diseases, optimising irrigation, and improving yields.

(d) Strategic interventions for agri-tech empowerment

- Create a 'Digital Kisan Platform' integrating land records, weather data, satellite imagery, and AI-based crop recommendations.
- Offer subsidies for agri-drones and IoT sensors connected to AI systems for precision farming.
- Promote AI models that predict pest attacks or monsoon variations, reducing crop loss.
- Build blockchain-based agri-marketplaces ensuring transparency in pricing and logistics.

- Encourage public–private AI innovation labs in agri universities for developing local crop intelligence models.

AI-powered digital healthcare

Telemedicine and AI-powered health apps can bring doctors virtually to rural homes. With IoT-enabled health devices, patients can monitor sugar levels, blood pressure, and more, saving lives and reducing the pressure on urban hospitals.

(e) Government measures to strengthen rural health systems

- Establish 'e-Swasth Kendras' in every PHC with teleconsultation facilities and AI triage systems.
- Integrate rural health data into the Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission for predictive disease mapping.
- Use AI diagnostic tools to detect TB, anemia, or malnutrition early using mobile phone cameras.
- Train ASHA and ANM workers to use AI-based health apps for quick screening and health record updates.
- Deploy AI voice assistants in local dialects for maternal health guidance and child immunisation reminders.

AI for entrepreneurship & employment

Digital platforms can help rural artisans, women entrepreneurs, and small businesses sell products nationwide. AI can further enable smarter marketing, credit scoring, and logistics planning.

(f) Policy support to boost rural innovation & jobs

- Set up Rural Digital Business Incubation Centres with AI-driven market insights and training tools.
- Create a National Rural Start-up Fund supporting AI-based AgriTech, FinTech, and EdTech ventures.
- Use AI algorithms to assess micro-loan eligibility and minimize credit risk for rural entrepreneurs.
- Promote 'Made in Village' AI-enabled e-commerce platforms with smart translation and recommendation engines.
- Offer AI mentorship networks connecting rural innovators with mentors and investors globally.

Digital platforms can help rural artisans, women entrepreneurs, and small businesses sell products nationwide

A call to action for our government

Our government has already taken strong steps with Digital India, BharatNet, and PM-WANI initiatives. But we must accelerate adoption with:

- Public–Private Partnerships (PPP) to co-create AI infrastructure and rural data ecosystems.
- Subsidies for smart devices and low-cost AI kits for schools and farmers.
- Local-language AI models to ensure inclusivity.
- Mass digital and AI literacy campaigns through schools, community centers, and panchayats.

If we can combine technology, artificial intelligence, and the creativity of our rural communities, India will not just grow — it will transform. The goal should not only be 'Digital India' but 'AI-Driven Digital Bharat', where every village, every farmer, every student, and every woman is connected, empowered, and future-ready. ■

INTERVIEW

QUICK HEAL MERGES HUMAN INSIGHT WITH MACHINE LEARNING

Dr. Sanjay Katkar, Jt. Managing Director, Quick Heal Technologies Limited, speaks to **Aishwarya Saxena** about leveraging AI to build an intelligent, inclusive, and privacy-first cybersecurity ecosystem

Quick Heal has consistently positioned itself as a pioneer in India's cybersecurity landscape. How has your strategic vision evolved in response to escalating cyber threats and AI advancements in 2025?

Over the past year, our strategic vision at Quick Heal Technologies Limited has matured from broad endpoint protection to a layered, intelligence-driven platform that adapts in real time. In 2025, we launched SIA, an Agentic AI based assistant in our EDR & XDR offering to enable faster detection and improve SOC analyst productivity.

Further, we expanded GoDeep.AI's threat-telemetry ingestion to include cloud and network feeds, enabling dynamic model updates as new malware and phishing campaigns emerge. This proactive posture is aligned to our firm belief that cybersecurity must anticipate attacker innovations, especially in light of AI accelerating both offense and defense, rather than rely solely on signature-based patches.

AI now plays a central role in advanced threat detection. Can you walk us through how Quick Heal leverages AI and machine learning in both consumer and enterprise products?

AI and machine learning now underpin every cybersecurity solution we offer, whether it on the consumer side under the brand Quick Heal,

> **Our approach combines self-learning anomaly detectors with adversarial-AI testing frameworks that simulate attacker Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures at machine speed**

or the enterprise side under the brand Seqrite. In our flagship consumer product Quick Heal Total Security, Smart Scan engine combines hands-on rule sets with behavior-analysis models trained on millions of threat samples, catching novel ransomware and zero-day exploits before signatures exist.

Enterprise customers benefit from Seqrite's AI-driven XDR platform, which correlates events across email, endpoint, and cloud logs, using graph-based threat modeling to trace attack chains end to end. Behind every module, continuous ML-based tuning ensures we stay ahead of adversaries who weaponize AI themselves. Continuous feedback loops ensure both offerings evolve alongside the threat landscape.

Quick Heal's MoU with Bhashini is widely regarded as a game-changer for multilingual cybersecurity education in India. What was the genesis of this partnership and its strategic importance for both Quick Heal and the sector?

Our memorandum of understanding with Bhashini was born from the recognition that language barriers can thwart even the best cybersecurity training. At Quick Heal, we saw early on those regional dialects shape user behavior and susceptibility to social engineering. Partnering with Bhashini, whose speech-recognition, translation, and OCR pipelines are best-in-class, allows us to deliver contextualised, culturally resonant cybersecurity education across Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, and beyond—empowering millions who previously lacked access to localised digital-safety resources.

The partnership aligns Quick Heal with the DPDP Act, 2023, which emphasizes

regional language communications. How will your team ensure robust compliance in upcoming modules and products?

Compliance with the DPDP Act, 2023, hinges on preserving linguistic and data-privacy integrity. To meet these mandates, we have embedded DPDP principles into our product-development lifecycle: every new language module undergoes privacy-by-design assessments, encryption checks, and user-consent workflows tailored to regional norms. Our internal compliance squad works hand in glove with Bhashini's team, ensuring that translation never strays beyond explicitly consented use.

With Bhashini's tech stack (speech recognition, OCR, translation, and text-to-speech), what are the immediate priorities for product integration and national rollout?

For now, we are starting by providing a consent management user experience and interface in all regional languages, making it easier for consumers to understand their rights while signing up with our clientele. The language aspect will help us make this more inclusive by clearly informing users about their rights and what they are agreeing to. This marks an important first step.

We need to prioritise partnerships that marry technological prowess with cultural and linguistic empathy

What does this partnership signal for the broader Indian cybersecurity industry? Do you expect similar collaborations to shape the future of digital safety and privacy?

This partnership stands as a turning point for India's cybersecurity ecosystem. By bridging language divides, it sets a precedent for symbiotic collaborations between technology innovators and language-technology platforms. We look forward to more such alliances emerging, uniting threat-intel firms with local language experts, to create a truly inclusive digital-safety fabric across the nation.

How is Quick Heal preparing for upcoming cybersecurity challenges as attackers themselves become smarter and deploy AI? What's your philosophy on "AI versus AI" in cyber defense?

As cybercriminals continue to embrace AI to automate phishing, deepfakes, and polymorphic malware, we at Quick Heal Technologies Limited adhere to a philosophy of "AI versus AI."

Our approach combines self-learning anomaly detectors with adversarial-AI testing frameworks that simulate attacker Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures at machine speed. Our researchers at Seqrite Labs, India's largest malware and fraud analysis facility, continuously stress-test our models against the latest generative-AI exploits, ensuring that our defenses evolve as rapidly as the threats themselves.

Finally, what is your message to other CEOs or CIOs seeking to make digital safety and privacy education more inclusive?"

Inclusivity in digital-safety education is not optional, it is foundational. We need to prioritise partnerships that marry technological prowess with cultural and linguistic empathy. Only by making cybersecurity knowledge accessible in every language and context can we build a resilient cyber-ecosystem that protects all strata of society. ■

editor@thefoundermedia.com

INTERVIEW

STRENGTHENING CYBER RESILIENCE IN THE AGE OF AI AND IOT THREATS

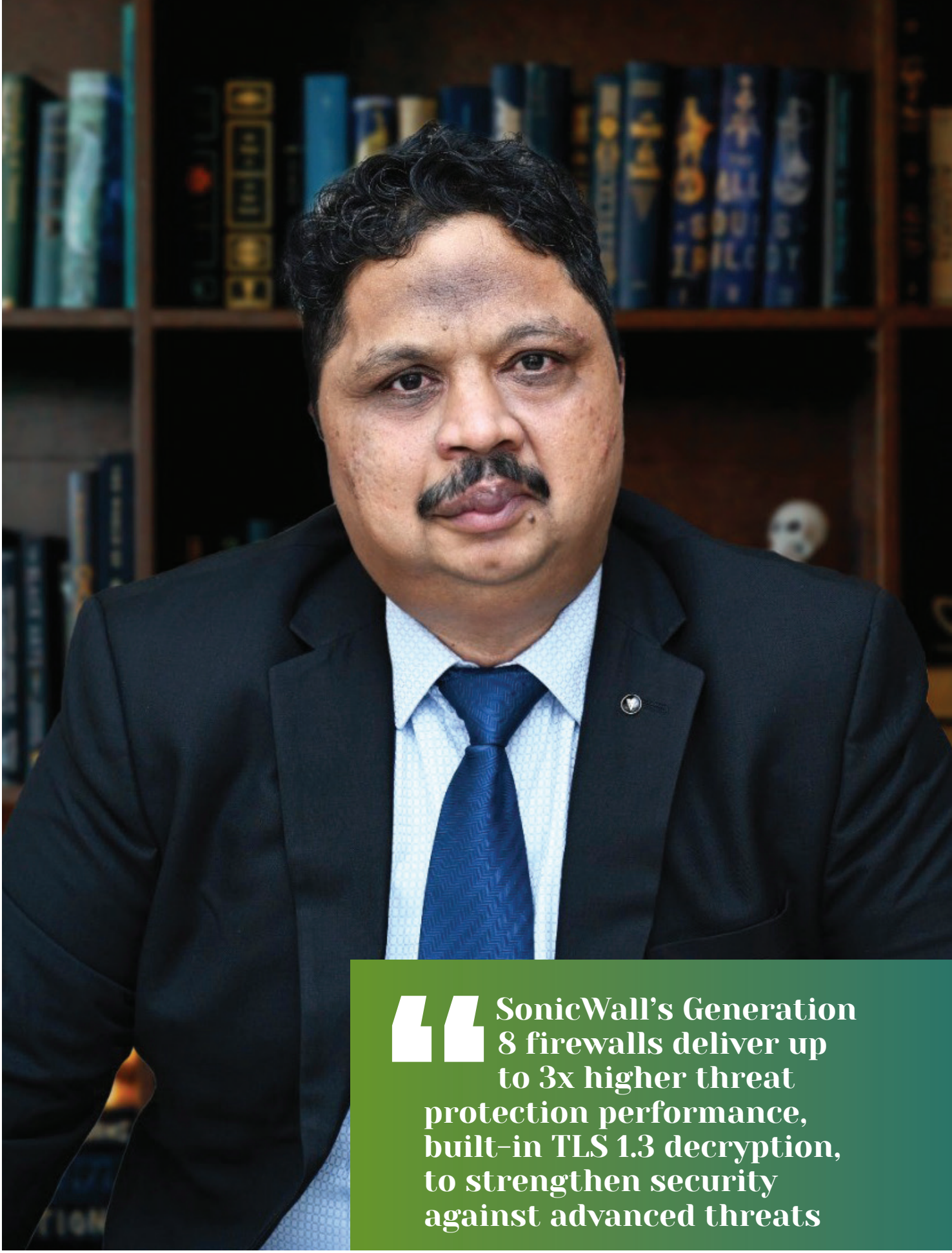
In an exclusive interaction with **Aishwarya Saxena, Sanjeev Kumar, Regional Sales Director-India & SAARC, Sonicwall**, delves into how the company is fortifying organisations against the rising tide of cyber threats through AI-powered defence mechanisms, zero trust architectures, and next-generation security solutions designed to build resilient, future-ready enterprises.

With the rise of AI-powered cyberattacks and IoT threats in India as highlighted by SonicWall's recent threat report, how should organisations rethink their security strategies?

With AI-powered attacks and IoT threats on the rise, organisations must shift to a Zero Trust approach (ZTNA), leverage AI-driven security tools for real-time detection (RTDMI), and secure IoT environments through segmentation and next-gen firewalls. Partnering with MSS/MDR services also ensures 24x7 monitoring and faster response. Security today has to be continuous, adaptive, and intelligence driven.

How is SonicWall supporting its partners and customers to stay ahead of emerging threats like cryptojacking and ransomware targeting firewalls and VPNs?

SonicWall provides real-time threat intelligence, AI-powered detection, and sandboxing to protect against threats like cryptojacking and ransomware. We support our partners with Zero Trust, MDR, training, deal registration, and incentive programs to enhance customer security.



> **SonicWall's Generation 8 firewalls deliver up to 3x higher threat protection performance, built-in TLS 1.3 decryption, to strengthen security against advanced threats**

Can you elaborate on SonicWall's approach to Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA) and what advantages it offers to MSPs and MSSPs in the region?

MSPs and MSSPs require tools that support scalability, differentiation, and recurring revenue. Our offerings deliver more value with simplified management, built-in zero trust, and optional co-managed services to cut overhead and risk.

SonicWall's Generation, SonicWall's Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA) ensures secure, identity-based access by verifying every user, device, and application, whether inside or outside the network. For MSPs and MSSPs, this means simplified management through a single cloud-native platform (SonicWall Unified Platform), reduced dependency on traditional VPNs, and the ability to offer scalable and finally monthly subscription-based services. The result is stronger security, improved user experience, and new recurring revenue opportunities for partners in the region.

We believe today's technology leaders need to adopt a proactive, layered security strategy, embrace Zero Trust, leverage AI-driven threat intelligence

How does SonicWall's Generation 8 firewall portfolio improve security posture and operational

efficiency for businesses in India & SAARC?

In today's hybrid, multi-cloud environment, organisations need secure, fast internet access for all users and services without sacrificing compliance. As networks grow more distributed, protecting each connection is essential. We continually develop advanced solutions to keep up with evolving cybersecurity needs.

SonicWall's Generation 8 firewalls deliver up to 3x higher threat protection performance, built-in TLS 1.3 decryption, to strengthen security against advanced threats. For businesses in India & SAARC, we also bring cloud-native management, automation, and lower TCO, enabling faster response, easier operations, and improved compliance, critical for both enterprises and mid-market organizations.

How is SonicWall leveraging AI and machine learning to enhance threat detection and real-time attack mitigation for Indian enterprises?

SonicWall employs AI and machine learning in its Capture Threat Network to analyse large volumes of events on a daily basis, supporting real-time detection of ransomware, cryptojacking, and zero-day attacks. For Indian enterprises, this approach provides faster attack mitigation through automated responses, enables TLS 1.3 decryption with DPI-SSL, and supports firewalls that use continuous learning and adaptation to address evolving threats with reduced manual intervention.

As cloud adoption rises, what unique challenges and solutions exist for securing hybrid and multi-cloud environments with SonicWall's technologies?

With hybrid and multi-cloud adoption, the main challenges are visibility, consistent policy enforcement, and securing data across diverse platforms. SonicWall addresses this through cloud-delivered firewalls and Zero Trust Network Access, combined with centralized management and analytics. This gives enterprises unified control, protection against lateral threats, and seamless scalability to secure workloads across AWS, Azure, private clouds, and on-prem environments.

Finally, what advice would you give technology leaders seeking to future-proof their organisations against the fast-evolving threat landscape in the region?

We believe today's technology leaders need to adopt a proactive, layered security strategy, embrace Zero Trust, leverage AI-driven threat intelligence, and ensure continuous monitoring with MDR/MSSP support. At the same time, invest in employee awareness and cloud-ready security. Futureproofing is about building a resilient, adaptive defense posture. ■

editor@thefoundermedia.com

RT COVERAGE

REWRITING THE PRODUCTIVITY PLAYBOOK WITH AI AND GEMINI

The future of work is here, and it's augmented by AI. At a roundtable hosted by **Google Cloud, Econz** and orgainsed by **Tech Disruptor Media**, CIOs revealed how **Google Workspace** with Gemini is unlocking new levels of productivity, collaboration, and decision-making

IN A world where every decision is shaped by data and every process is touched by AI, collaboration is emerging as the real catalyst of transformation. That was the shared belief as some of India's most forward-thinking CIOs gathered in Mumbai for a Google Cloud roundtable, hosted with Tech Disruptor Media and Econz, to discuss how Google Workspace with Gemini is empowering people, not replacing them and redefining what productivity means in the modern enterprise.

The session brought together an influential group of CIOs and technology heads from sectors including manufacturing, BFSI, infrastructure, and healthcare to discuss how Google Workspace, powered by Gemini, is ushering in a new era of intelligent collaboration, one that goes beyond tools and transforms the very fabric of enterprise productivity.

From experimentation to real productivity

Setting the stage for the conversation, Rajan C.S., Customer Engineer, Google Cloud, observed that the discussion around AI has shifted dramatically in the past few years — from curiosity and experimentation to tangible outcomes. He shared real-world examples from client engagements where executives who once spent days digesting lengthy reports now rely on AI assistants to summarise data and generate insights within minutes.

"That is the real impact. Tools like Gemini are helping leaders move from reading data to reasoning with it," Rajan said.

He also cited the case of a general insurance company that has digitised its training modules for thousands of agents, enabling frontline staff to query policies or access learning content through conversational AI interfaces built directly into Workspace. "These are no longer theoretical pilots. We are seeing measurable productivity benefits across industries," he said.

Productivity with privacy

While the power of AI is undeniable, the conversation quickly turned to a critical question: how can organisations harness this capability without compromising on security and compliance?

"We cannot compromise privacy for productivity," emphasised Jyothirlatha B, Chief Technology Officer at Godrej Capital, highlighting that for financial institutions, innovation must always be balanced with stringent regulatory requirements. She explained how her team has implemented platform-level safeguards to prevent sensitive customer information from being exposed during AI-assisted workflows.

Her view was echoed by Shirish Mishra, Head of Information Security at Piramal Finance, who noted that security teams today evaluate not just applications but also the AI layers that underpin them.

Addressing these concerns, Rajan clarified that Gemini for Google Workspace operates entirely within enterprise boundaries. "Any data uploaded — whether as a prompt or a file — remains within the customer's domain and is never used for model training," he explained.

Collaboration as a strategic enabler

Speakers across industries agreed that collaboration platforms have evolved far beyond being simple communication tools. They are now strategic enablers of decision-making and competitive advantage.

Randhir Padwal, Head of IT at RPG Life Sciences, explained that AI-powered collaboration is helping leaders cut through the overwhelming data clutter that once slowed critical decisions.

Rajesh Deshpande, IT Head at Tech Mahindra, added that AI-driven summarisation and meeting recap features are saving teams hours of manual work.

"In hybrid environments, the speed of information matters as much as accuracy," he said.

The transformative potential of AI was also evident in field operations. Dr. Avadhut Parab, CIO at Waaree Renewable Technologies, shared how his organisation is leveraging predictive models to identify potential service issues in solar installations before they escalate, a move that has reduced field visits by nearly half.

"It's not about replacing human work, it's about making people more capable," he said.

Combining Workspace with Gemini's AI capabilities, he added, is helping teams move faster, make decisions in real time, and operate with greater security and control, a reflection of the growing maturity of cloud adoption across industries

Data, culture, and the human factor

While technology continues to advance rapidly, several speakers cautioned that successful AI adoption requires more than just cutting-edge tools — it demands a fundamental cultural shift within organisations.

"Buying licences is easy. Building conviction is hard," said Sanjay Chandiramani, Head of IT at Course5 Intelligence, stressing that change management remains one of the biggest barriers to AI success.

Dhiraj Prakash Jha, Head of Information

Technology at Muthoot Homefin, highlighted another critical factor: data quality. “AI’s accuracy depends on what we feed it. Clean, contextual data is the foundation of useful intelligence,” he noted.

Sundar Rajan, General Manager - IT at AFCONS, added that automated project reporting and analytics have significantly reduced follow-up time and improved visibility across complex infrastructure projects. “Automated reporting has reduced follow-up time and improved visibility,” he said.

Meanwhile, Tejas Shah, Head of IT at Prince Pipes & Fittings, pointed out that a unified workspace environment is transforming how teams collaborate. “Having everything integrated, documents, meetings, chat, and now Gemini, helps teams act faster and make decisions in context,” he said.

Built for the future of work

For Rajan Raman, Senior Product Manager at Google Cloud, the real strength of Google Workspace lies in how AI is woven directly into its core. “We’re not layering AI on top of productivity tools; we’ve built them together. That’s why collaboration, security, and intelligence coexist naturally,” he explained.

Adding a broader perspective, Rajesh V, Head of Cloud Sales for South and Middle East at Econz, shared insights on how organisations are modernising their work environments with Google Workspace. He noted that enterprises adopting cloud-first collaboration platforms are already seeing tangible improvements in communication, responsiveness, and productivity.

Combining Workspace with Gemini’s AI capabilities, he added, is helping teams move faster, make decisions in real time, and operate with greater security and control, a reflection of the growing maturity of cloud adoption across industries.

Augmentation, not automation

As the roundtable concluded, one clear takeaway emerged: the next era of enterprise productivity will not be defined by automation alone. Instead, it will be shaped by augmentation by using AI to make every role, every team, and every decision smarter.

The CIOs who gathered in Mumbai agreed that the future of work is not about replacing people but about empowering them, giving them the tools to focus on what truly matters while AI handles the complexity beneath the surface. And in that future, solutions like Google Workspace with Gemini are set to play a defining role.■

BHARAT™ NETWORK GROUP

UPCOMING EVENTS 2025-26

2nd Edition

BANKTECH X

150+ Delegates

05 December 2025
Bengaluru

TECHVERSE 2026

100+ Delegates

22 January 2026
Chennai

2nd Edition

OOH PHOENIX AWARDS

150+ Delegates

February 2026
Mumbai

An Initiative of

BNG BHARAT™ NETWORK GROUP

An Initiative of

The Banker media.com — A BRAND OF BNG

Host Partner

Supporting Partner

NUCFDC

2nd Edition

BANKTECH X

TECH-DRIVEN TRUST: THE NEW ERA OF COOPERATIVE BANKING

5 DECEMBER 2025 | THE CAPITOL HOTEL BENGALURU

For Sponsorship & Exhibition

Abhinav Chaudhary
abhinav@thefoundermedia.in
8700749849

For Speaking, Delegate & Awards Nominations

Neha Gupta
neha@thefoundermedia.in
9891479894

SOUTH INDIA URBAN COOPERATIVE BANKS EDITION

banktechx.com

An Initiative of

BHARAT NETWORK GROUP

Concept by

Tech Disruptor media.com

TECHVERSE 2026

Exploring the Universe of Enterprise Innovation

22 January 2026 | Chennai | Full-Day, Invite-Only Leadership Forum

For Sponsorship & Partnership Opportunities

Akash Gupta
akash@thefoundermedia.in | 9650014500

Naman Singhal
naman@thefoundermedia.in | 9267933240

Abhinav Chaudhary
abhinav@thefoundermedia.in | 8700749849

techverse.techdisruptormedia.com