'Project Pratham': Scaling Digital Transformation at Vedanta

Anand Laxshmivarahan R | CDO, Vedanta Limited | April 6, 2021
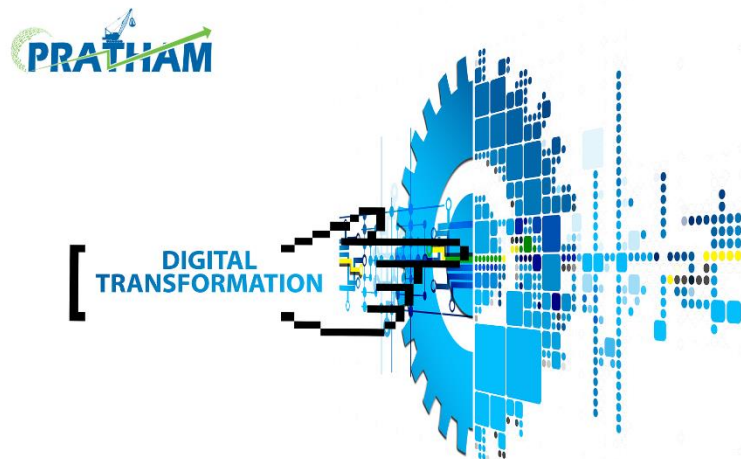
"At least 40% of all businesses will die in the next 10 years… if they don't figure out how to change their entire company to accommodate new technologies" says Cisco Chairman, John Chambers.

The words of John Chambers are a fair warning to us all. Digital transformation is at the heart of future growth for most businesses. Few of the most traditional businesses that were seen as 'brick and mortar companies' and were slow to transform, are recognising the need for digitalisation and have moved past the traditional ways of working. Today, it is not only about expansion, but about efficiency and a key enabler to that is digitalisation. Interaction between machines, data collection, and analysis are proving to be game-changers. Digitalisation has not only improved business gains but has also increased safety standards.

At Vedanta, we are building on our successes with 'digital' both in the mining and metals, and oil and gas business with rapid digital transformation. In our oil and gas business, we have had the distinction of being awarded the digitally advanced company of the year and have been the recipient of several global and national awards. We have also had the unique opportunity to partner with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) in shaping the National Digital roadmap for the country's E&P sector. In Mining and Metals, we have transformed ourselves from operating mechanized and manual mines to fully digital mines. We are at a juncture in our digital journey where we are scaling our digital efforts across businesses. This rapid digital transformation project at Vedanta in partnership with global consulting firm BCG is titled '*Project Pratham - Digital-first…led by business*'.

Project Pratham is built around the vision to make Vedanta a fully digitally driven company with a focus on significantly improving volume and cost and improving ease of doing business. We continue to embrace and drive digital-first behaviors, and this has support, sponsorship and

mindshare right at the top. While we are committed to a digital future, there are a lot of risks and decisions involved in a digital makeover of a company. To help with a smooth transition, Vedanta is working with great in-house talent and a few of the best globally ranked service providers.

While all businesses are now aiming to become digital, it is important to keep a focus on what exactly the company wishes to achieve through digitalisation. 'Project Pratham' has been designed keeping a forward-looking business strategy in mind and aims to address three key objectives.

Firstly, it will focus on building and delivering a portfolio of digital initiatives in four key verticals - Manufacturing, Commercial, HSSEQ, and enabling functions. This project aims to identify and execute 70+ initiatives with a clearly identified and prioritized Top 20 'A-class' big impact initiatives. These initiatives are across a spectrum and include - deploying smart manufacturing technologies such as advanced process control combined with AI/ML, predictive maintenance, and digital twins within our core manufacturing processes; unified HSE and HR platforms, digital logistics control towers for supply chain transparency and optimization, hyper-automated source to pay processes, quality automation, Metals eCommerce and much more.

Second is the Vedanta Digital organization design which includes infusing new talent, embedding digital talent withing core operations and technical functions, and hiring digital experts. We are building an agile and energized talent pool across six capability clusters – Analytics and Data science, Smart Manufacturing, Cloud Architecture, Data Architecture, Digital Program management and digital solution architecting. This will of course be adequately supported by retained and partner capabilities in foundational IT, cybersecurity, and contract governance.

Lastly, Project Pratham will lead to large scale digital capability building at Vedanta. To this end, we have launched Pratham Digital Academy that addresses digital skilling across the Vedanta group in 3 dimensions:
-   Digital for Top 100 leaders – focused on leadership and change management, culture and capability enhancement, embedding AI & analytics in decisions etc.
-   Digital Specialists Program – that includes manufacturing and asset analytics, functional analytics areas such as in Commercial, HR, Finance, and masterclasses from our major digital technology partners. Specialists will also go through key Cloud and analytics related professional certifications.
-   Digital Generalists Program – that focuses on getting every Vedanta employee skilled on digital basics – data analytics, agile ways of working, design thinking etc.

As we traverse this journey, we will continue to write about our successes and learnings. With this series of conversations on 'Project Pratham,' we wholeheartedly welcome your ideas and suggestions so that this project can achieve its full potential and you can contribute to us becoming a business of the future.