ASIA INC.500

RISE OF THE MUSIC PUBLISHING BUSINESS

- SABERA PATNI

FIND YOUR BALANCE

THE HEALING POWER OF YOGA

BHARAT THAKUR

THE LIFE SCULPTOR

The healing power of Yoga

NGO HOANG ANH CHIEF EDITOR

Hearty Congratulations to Bharat Thakur on being awarded the Indo-Malaysian highest civilian award. This edition brings you the nuggets of Artistic Yoga and how it is transforming the world around us. With the pandemic and dawn of mental and screen fatigue, it has become the need of the hour. Bharat Thakur started the mission with the vision of spreading a form of Yoga that would help people first get in shape, become disease-free and then move towards the higher practices akin to Patanjali's Ashtanga Yog.

Artistic Yoga is an innovative, dynamic, and powerful Yoga system that affects the body like no other form of exercise. It combines ancient yogic techniques (asanas, pranayama, bandhas, kriyas & mudras) with modern cardiovascular-training and partner-stretches that works on the Individual at every level - the physical level, where flexibility, strength, and endurance are the primary goal, to the mental and spiritual levels where awareness of the body, alertness, and meditation bring about a complete transformation.

Along with the creative use of Exercise and Yogasanas (physical yoga postures) and Partner-stretching techniques (that help in quickly improving flexibility), Bharat introduced Cardiovascular training and the concept of Body-Part training into his Yoga. While traditional schools of Yoga repeat the same Asanas every class, Artistic Yoga classes are unique each day and focus on only two body parts in a class, thereby achieving dramatic results in body-toning and weight loss (for those who need it).

We truly wish and hope all our readers will take their physical, mental, and spiritual state of health to the next level. Happy reading.

ASIA INC. 500

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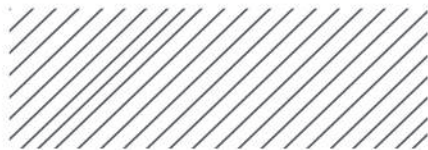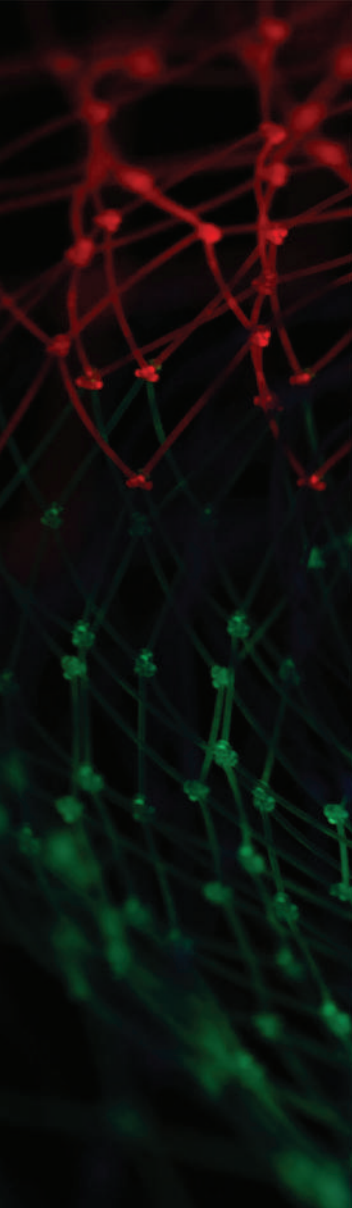**Bhaskar R**
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Our platform is a great source of information and connect in areas of AI, Blockchain and other upcoming technologies and frameworks. At the end of every quarter, we choose and rank the best 500 organizations in various aspects all throughout Asia.
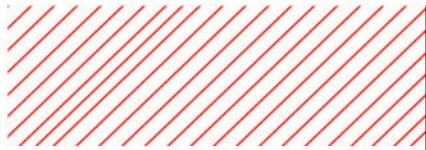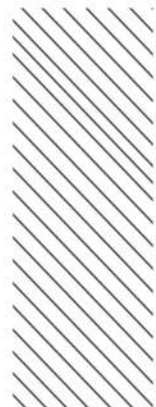
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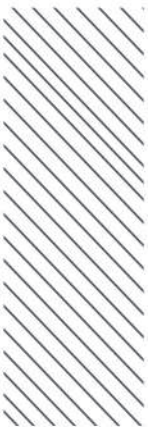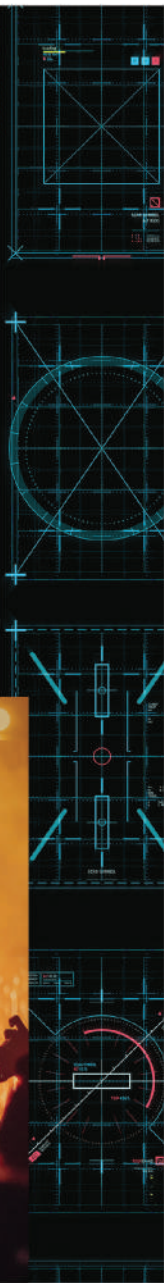Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur
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A yogi with a mission, a serial entrepreneur interested in anything and everything, a visionary who constantly seeks to create a new future, a painter extraordinaire, creating art with a madness of a true artist; the perfect mentor, teaching life lessons with his every move; an enigmatic teacher, a master of his own mind, with an untouchable clarity; the ultimate paradox – a man who embraces the material world firmly rooted in the mystical realms ... and to some, he is simply, the world's best chef who relishes in the art of cooking and serving his delightful creations; the name **Bharat Thakur** conjures up a breathtaking collage of impressions.

An unconventional personality, Bharat Thakur has a small but fiercely loyal group of students who embrace his spirituality and life. Refusing to be pigeonholed, and rejecting ashrams and followers of all kinds, he believes that the student-teacher relationship is personal and unique and cannot be packaged or commoditized. Indifferent to titles like 'New Age' guru he is a man who dares to express all his multi-dimensions to the fullest, pursuing his unique vision with a propelling energy in his own idiosyncratic manner– one that we may fully understand only in the years to come.

Born in Dhanbad, Jharkhand, India, in 1972, **Bharat Thakur** was the second of four children. His parents were deeply spiritual and devoted to a Yogi from the Himalayas, Sri Sukhdev Brahmachari. At the age of four, he was taken by the Yogi to the mountains where he studied Yoga and other spiritual practices from ancient Kriya Yoga, Tantra, Mantra, Sufi, Jain and Buddhist traditions for fourteen years. Recalling this as the most transformative period in his life, he says, "I learnt from a great teacher, and to me, that is someone who simply makes sure the lesson is learnt".

THE YOGA JOURNEY

Bharat returned from the Himalayas to resume his formal education, completing his Bachelors and Masters of Physical Education from the prestigious Lakshmibai National College of Physical Education, Jiwaji University, Gwalior. His research thesis was about 'the effects of 'Kapalabhati Kriya', a powerful yogic breathing technique, on cardiovascular efficiency. A decade later, he would also complete his thesis on 'Lifestyle assessment of Indian yogis belonging to different yogic practices' receiving his PhD in Yoga and Exercise Physiology from the Sardat Patel University, Gujarat, India.

Deeply set caves in the remote and forbidding heights and valleys of the 2,500 km long and 200-kilometre-wide Himalayan mountains have for millennia been a sanctuary for spiritual knowledge. These spaces have nurtured many lineages of spiritual adepts who for centuries contemplated and delved deep into their inner world. From his days in the mountains with his Master, **Bharat** had imbibed a strong affinity to research.

> **"I believe in research and research only. Yoga is a science that has yet to be understood in its full depth and this is possible only through research"**

On completing his academic qualifications, Bharat Thakur was invited by the scion of the famed Gwalior Royal Family, the Scindias, to teach Yoga & Physical Education at the prestigious Scindia School, Gwalior. He taught for two years and here, his natural ability to teach and reach out to people come to the fore. In this short time, he would develop his unique approach to Yoga, one that was pragmatic but at the same time aimed for the highest ideals that man could reach for.

"I aim very high. But I'm interested in solutions for the common man. The method is only as good as how fast it can take you to your destination," he likes to say.

TAPASYA - *STOKING THE INNER FIRE*

Immediately after this period, from 1998 onwards, Bharat Thakur traveled extensively throughout India and the world conducting workshops. He called them **'Tapasya'. 'Tapas'** is a word from Yoga which means 'purification of the mind and body in the intense heat of dedicated effort'. In these workshops which were a great draw among the youth, he taught ancient meditation techniques that had the potential to set off a powerful process of transformation. For this he drew from some of the most powerful techniques gathered not only from his study of yoga but also from Zen Buddhism, Sufism and Tantra.

The people who came in contact with him found their lives transformed in a fundamental way and within a short span of time he gathered a group of students who were drawn to his method, his passion and the energy he constantly radiated. He would tell them to **"be addicted to your own growth as a human being. That's the most important."**

His pinpointed directness along with the natural generosity of spirit resulted in a loyal, committed, intelligent and professional core team of disciples who came to him from all walks of life. There were marketing and finance professionals, engineers, designers, and of course yoga enthusiasts who today - twenty+ years later - manage and run his ventures across the globe. His passion for the people who work for him is legendary. "It's about each one's evolution. I insist up on it. Especially with my students and disciples

SEEDS OF A REVOLUTION

Going back to the year 1999... after much research and review, **Bharat Thakur** realized that yoga as a science had stagnated. Although there were many authentic and dedicated teachers who followed the core principles, the methodology was archaic. He says he was reminded of the words of the Buddha, **"anything that works is truth"** and therefore when these methods were not working, he felt that it was time for change.

21st century lifestyle had become totally sedentary, and consequently, man had become overweight, lazy, unfit and suffered from a host of diseases like back pain, diabetes, asthma, and insomnia – diseases that were virtually unheard of fifty years ago. People had lower attention spans, had unhealthy eating habits, everyone was in a hurry and there was always very little time on hand.

"Why is it that the practice of yoga has remained unchanged?"

This was the seed thought of a simple but revolutionary idea – to make yoga truly relevant, not just for the fitness freaks or the serious practitioners of meditation, but for the common man and the housewife. With his training in exercise physiology at the back of his mind, he thought, "what if we were to combine the modern scientific method based on proven concepts of exercise physiology and bio mechanics with powerful ancient Yogic practices". .

This could provide a complete workout for the body, stabilize the mind, harmonize the breath and relax the entire nervous system". For those who object-ed to this approach saying the goal of Yoga is to be able to meditate, Bharat countered, "how will you meditate if you are obese or have back pain ... first remove the disease, then meditation will automatically follow you like the cool early morning breeze."

Thus, the Artistic Yoga movement took wings

CREATING A ROAD MAP FOR HAPPINESS

This concept was worked out into a complete wellness paradigm, keeping the common man in view. Artistic Yoga would not only target all five aspects of fitness – strength, endurance, flexibility, agility and coordinative ability; it would tone the nervous system, heal the heart, and all the vital organs and take the practitioner into states of coherence where the cells' ageing process would slow down, and one would be well placed to enter deep states of relaxation and meditation. All of this would be achieved through a simple one-hour workout three times a week – a simple and practical road map to a joyful life.

This innovation caught the imagination of common folks and the who's who alike. From 2000 to 2003, Artistic Yoga centers opened in New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad.

Bharat Thakur carefully chose a handful of his own students that he would train personally to make into his core group of teachers. Artistic Yoga practitioners at the time were the top of their field – be it in business, sport or films. From actors Salman Khan to Kareena Kapoor; Priyanka Chopra to Katrina Kaif; from actor Manisha Koirala to singer Sunidhi Chauhan to director David Dhawan; from tennis player Mahesh Bhupathi to tennis legend Boris Becker and cricketer Shane Warne; From industrialist Ratan Tata to Sunil Mittal of Airtel; from Sarod legend Amjad Ali Khan to Sitarist Anoushka Shankar – they all took to Yoga after their interactions with him and sessions with his team of teachers.

When Bharat came to the scene, Yoga had many celebrity teachers, who had cult status and international fan followings. Bharat stuck a very different chord. "My goal is not to be the best yoga teacher or guru in the world, but to create thousands of dedicated world-class teachers who can teach yoga in its most authentic form and bring healing and happiness into people's lives".

Bharat Thakur's Artistic Yoga also conducted sessions at corporate conferences for many organizations including Microsoft, Shell, Unilever, Schlumberger, Novartis, Air-Tel, Infosys, UTV, and several more across India, Dubai and Moscow.

2005 was a year of expansion. In March the first international Artistic Yoga studio opened in Dubai. A milestone for the Yoga movement as this move was hugely instrumental in making the people of West Asia aware of the universality and scientific basis Yoga.

In June, he was invited to visit Russia and started classes in Moscow for the heads of Sistema, the largest company in Russia. He was featured on the cover of the leading weekly magazine India Today, listed among the 'Top 50 Young Guns - Leaders of This Generation,' He was featured in Time Magazine where he was invited to write a guest feature.

In 2010 Bharat Thakur shifted his base to Dubai and began the next phase of his middle east expansion to Sharjah and Abu Dhabi. Bharat frequently spoke on the most popular radio shows, some of them gathering huge ratings due to his popularity and his simple down to earth explanations about yoga, life and how to easily solve the problems people regularly faced in the 21st century. Not only the crème of the crème of Dubai, Bharat Thakur now had every taxi driver in Dubai practicing his simple and effective yogic techniques.

People look for complex ways to help themselves. Whereas most issues can be solved in an extremely simple manner.

Artistic Yoga became a household name all over the UAE. The orthodox and the sceptics alike, Indian diaspora and the local inhabitants alike, were spurred on by Bharat's series of talks on the science of weight loss and the art of happiness.

In this period, Bharat innovated again to create for the first-time sessions that focused on obesity, women's problems, pregnancy and lifestyle change.

At this point, Time Magazine, India Today, Times of India group, Discovery channel, and many leading publications and channels covered the Bharat Thakur phenomenon with cover titles such as **'guru cool', 'hip hop yogi'** and 'a new age guru who doesn't preach'. He and his band of teachers were featured in every single leading television channel and network in India – **Zee TV, Aaj Tak, Sahara and NDTV**. He released his first best-selling book, **'Yoga for All'** and went on to author eight more books - Yoga For The Family, Yoga For Stress Relief, Yoga For Flat Abs, Yoga For Weight Loss, Yoga For Backache Relief, Desktop Yoga, Yoga for Diabetes, and a poetry book Truth: The Art of the Mystics which contains some of the most powerful lines to be written about spirituality and the human quest for meaning.

The two books, **'A Lie and a Truth', and 'The King of the Sea'**, written by his student, describe and document his teachings and philosophy in a uniquely personal way, from the point of view of a student. "The truth cannot be passed on. It must be discovered by each individual, for himself."

By this time **Bharat Thakur's** Artistic Yoga was conducting yoga, spirituality and meditation workshops all over the world – in the UK, Italy, Germany, Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Bali, Azerbaijan and Australia. The company had seen a few generations of leaders… and Bharat was constantly thinking innovation.

By 2021, as the Yoga following worldwide approaches the 1 billion-mark, Yoga apps are bound to be the order of the day. Bharat's concern continues to be the same – how to keep the common man, whose daily life is filled with stress and anxiety, happy… How to tackle one of the most insidious diseases of all times – depression and isolation; something that the Corona virus pandemic was largely responsible for.

The Artistic Yoga App, which launched this year in 2021, is one such venture. Where the mantra reflects Bharat's core values - keep it simple, deliver results. The target is to bring the Artistic Yoga experience to the fifty million plus yoga practitioners all over the world, and particularly to reach out to those who have never tried yoga so far. But there is another dimension that he has opened. The artist.

Bharat's core values - **keep it simple, deliver results.**

THE ARTIST -
SEEING WITH THE MIND'S EYE

"A restless soul ever in search … **Bharat** has been relentless to move beyond or transcend the environmental reality and through his mind's eye, to seek out a different plane of time and space where he can contextualize his form."

*– **Dr. Ashrafi Bhagat**, art historian and critic.*

While still a little boy living in the caves with his teacher and his small band of fellow students, with enough time for contemplation and in the benevolent embrace of nature, under the light of the sun, moon and the stars, Bharat developed a close bond with the elements. Like the many streams that flow from the melting glaciers near the high passes of the Himalayas, Bharat's art began in pristine glacial heights.

He used to spontaneously make figures on the snow, often with his bare fingers, embellishing them with whatever he could find in those sparse locales - pebbles, leaves, twigs; he would carve ice figurines, make charcoal sketches on the walls of the caves.

He developed a deep affinity to nature, particularly for the rivers and for the trees and plants for the rich diversity of herbs, flowering plants and the towering cedars trees of the Himalayas called Deodar.

Along with the education in the traditional arts and mystical sciences, these were some of the earliest influences on the young mind.

CREATING EXPERIENCES

Tantra is a science where the practitioner develops a keen awareness and a measure of voluntary control over the sensory and autonomous nervous systems of the body. Bharat saw immense possibilities in applying techniques and protocols adapted from tantra to art, rather than create mere visual symbolism and references. While he spends a lot of time in researching his subject material, he believes in creating experiences for the viewer rather than conceptual art. In particular, he developed 'Yantra', series of paintings and the 'shoonya' series of cast bronze sculptures where he explores the impact of the visual geometry of Tantra on the observer.

To quote the renowned art critic, late Manoj Nair, "Bharat's painting style is ... very stark and spontaneous. He is searching for a light source that is not natural but comes from within and is an inner light."

The play of sunlight and flowing water, the shades of darkness, the objects of nature like rocks, leaves, stars ... colours of twilight, the shades of blue, a romance with the dark, and a phenomenal ability to attend to all the spontaneous events as they unfold that comes from years of meditation, we can see an abundance of these energies in his work.

The Himalayas have for eons been a retreat for those who sought to explore their inner world. Bharat had a rare and unique exposure to a wholly different class of human beings who have lived for tens of thousands of years in the mountains - monks, mendicants, wanderers, shamans, mystics, saints, adepts of yoga, tantra, ayurveda, and numerous other masters of the mystic arts. For eons these geologically active mountains have been a melting pot of spiritual seekers from Tibet, Central Asia and India. The ever shifting topography and the continuous mixing of peoples coming from diverse lands, combined with an uninterrupted reign of peace enforced by its forbidding terrain have together created a unique blend of cultures and traditions. Having grown up in this atmosphere, amongst its people, has allowed Bharat to collect a treasure of unique set of subjects and we can see this as a strong presence in his works. Among his most applauded series of paintings is 'Aghor', intimate portraits of these people of the mountains.

The artist says, *"I ... have sought to find fulfilment in the portrayal of the Sadhus whom I have personally encountered in the Himalayan Mountains ... I have also tried to portray the subtle aspects of their individual personalities and psychic energy".*

This attempt to portray what is not essentially a material quality ... which is beyond the physicality of paint and canvas is what has marked out Bharat as an artist.

"My subject is mystical, but my means are paint, canvas, metal and stone ... I keep attempting to marry the two, which seems impossible, I keep failing and every failure is the doorway to a new light ... and that is my journey".

His solo show in Dubai in February 2020 titled, **"A Thousand Cuts and An Arch – Explorations Into The Subconscious",** featured a collection of his paintings and Yoga-inspired sculptures where the artist has explored the hidden layers of the human psyche.

Art has been in the genes of all of Bharat's ventures. The first teacher of Artistic Yoga was Bharat, a young boy with big dreams cycling door to door in the punishing summers of Delhi doing 18-man hours a day. Things changed quickly for Bharat.

Yet, to self-fund the Tapasya movement, Bharat used to auction his paintings, and raise the money for his rents and travels. The artist and the yogi have in this way been inseparables as have his art and yoga.

In the artist's words, "when an innocent child looks at a sunrise or takes delight in the loving quarrel of two sparrows .. the child has complete attention for that event ... the child is completely one with the birds ... we see freedom ... flexibility ... openness ... fearlessness ... a sense of oneness in the innocence of the child ...

"As we grow into adults ... we develop fears, habits, blocks ... there is a loss of that innocence. Art is just a way to return to this innocence. Beyond fitness and good health Yoga too is this art. I once taught Yoga, now I live and breathe art".

Bharat was beginning to widen his footprint.

THE EARTHQUAKE

In 2015, Artistic Yoga established an international teacher training centre on the outskirts of Kathmandu Nepal. This would help Nepali teachers to become part of the Artistic Yoga movement. Even as the training had just commenced, the great Nepal **earth-quake of 2015**, happened.

Bharat led a team of twenty Artistic Yoga teachers which carried out major relief work in the interiors of the severely affected regions, during the earthquake time. Our entire Yoga community all over the world contributed to the relief.

In 2016, Bharat, got back to his sketch book and canvas after almost fifteen years. It also saw him connect once again to the soil of India

YOGA CHAKRA...

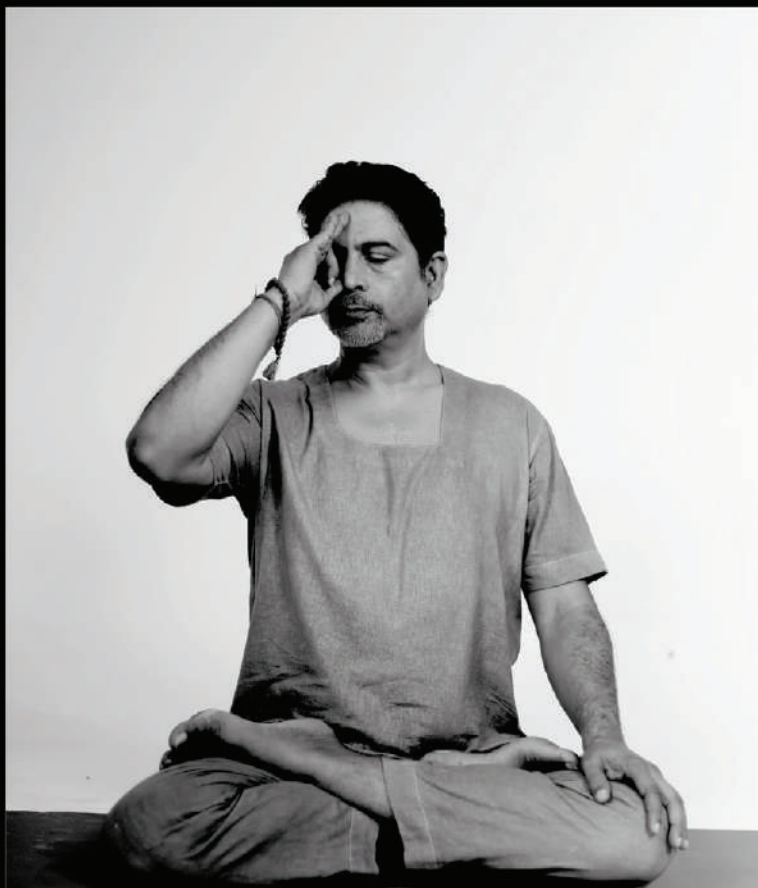## " PROMOTING YOGA IN THE RURAL SECTOR "

The objectives of the cycling marathon were to spread awareness of yoga in semi urban and rural India, to create awareness of pollution and promote and popularize cycling as a healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle choice among the youth.

This was also a time to connect back to the heart of India. What struck him was the state of the small farmers in this proud farming nation.

Bharat had a response. He began to spend more time in the arid areas between Bangalore and Hyderabad, particularly in Anantapur district in the state of Andhra Pradesh where he piloted projects in low rainfall, low water table areas.

A lot has happened in the last five years. Bharat has participated in numerous group exhibitions and auctions and has had seven solo exhibitions in Dubai, New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore including at the prestigious Visual Arts Gallery in Delhi and the iconic Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai.

In February 2016, **Bharat Thakur** led a team of Artistic Yoga teachers on a marathon cycling journey, called 'Yog Chakra', from Kathmandu to New Delhi and down the length of India to Kanyakumari. This 'Cyclothon' was flagged-off by the chief ministers of various states and in Delhi by the honourable union minister of India for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Naik. Over a period of 94 days, the team cycled around 6000 kms through villages, small towns and metros of 9 states of India, and Nepal.

THE SEEDS OF A REVIVAL

The last five years, have also been a time when Bharat has set up various teams to research different aspects of farming both in modern technologies and traditional methods. Based on his findings, he set up a project called Ankur.

This is a project which involves large scale greening of barren and rocky land with plantations of different varieties of trees, chosen for their ability to survive and thrive in these conditions with assistance. The aim is to revive the ecology, restore the water table, forest cover, create conditions for pollinators to nest and create a virtuous cycle of revival.

Ankur is based on **The ancient Vedic** knowhow of growing different kinds of forests with specific combinations of trees grown in certain geometric configurations. It deals with how different kinds of forests have different effects on our mind and body. With this knowledge, he is in the process of creating an array of forests, or Vana. Vana that provide a meditative space, energizing forests, healing forests, each with its own specific kind of trees, types of water bodies, and distinct landscapes, would be open to the public to come and experience their effects.

The vision is to bring the forests back into our lives. As we heal in their shade, we will feel impelled to care for them.

Over the years, Bharat has built upon his traditional knowledge of Ayurveda and Siddha medicines and herbs through constant research. He has evolved a system by which important herbs and vegetables for daily use can be grown by the common people in their kitchen and terrace gardens, making it possible to have a rich, joyous, healthy and uplifting lifestyle.

THE QUEST

Bharat likes to be in constant touch with people from all walks of life to teach yoga as a healing spiritual science. His many facets, as a farmer, as a philanthropist, entrepreneur and artist, allow him to reach out to all segments of society, but above all, Bharat is a passionate innovator who has sought to bring in newness into each of his ventures and create a way of life that balances livelihood and a spiritual quest for his workforce and society.

Rise of the Music Publishing Business

Let's talk music!

The music industry in India is at the threshold of a revolution. Today, you can access thousands of songs, old and new, just by looking for it on Google or by simply installing a music streaming app. It's that simple!

The Indian music industry, which was valued at **INR 7.4 billion** in 2007 has been growing steadily and has doubled to around **INR 15 billion** today.

It is predicted that this number will jump rapidly over the next 5 years crossing the **INR 22 billion** mark. Technological advances in the music industry have made it possible for both established music labels and independent artists to upload their work seamlessly across multiple music streaming platforms. While this has benefitted the creators, it has also spoiled the listeners for choice who now have the option to listen to their favorites anywhere, everywhere. All of this of course was made possible with the advent of the smartphones which, if one can say, seem to be getting smarter by the day.

Got voice, will sing!

Today music publishing or music distribution is very different from its previous models. Traditionally music distribution created a bridge between **'creators' and 'buyers'** where the buyers would be able to buy a license to use the song or album in a movie, a TV show or an advertisement. The audience would get a chance to listen to the original works using this media. Tradition aside, today's digital media creates an easy platform for artists to directly showcase their work and build an audience.

Gone are the days where only artists signed by big labels would be heard by people. The advent of smartphones along with the emergence of music distribution platforms like CD Baby, Distrokid, Tunecore and others, make it possible for both established labels and emerging independent artists to get their music to a much larger audience than was earlier possible. Some digital distribution platforms like Distrokid follow a simple model of an annual recurring subscription where an artist can pay an annual fee and upload any number of songs. Others charge a one-time fee per song/album. Most of the digital platforms have a sophisticated analysis which breakdowns how much money an artist has made with the number of plays on streaming platforms.

Music streaming platforms, the game changer!

The increase in the consumption of music by Indian listeners has been as much a result of smartphones, as much as it has been due to favorable government regulations which eased the use of internet and also the launch of multiple streaming platforms. Digital music platforms such as Apple music, Spotify, JioSaavn, Wynk and Gaana.com give access to users to listen to music anytime, anywhere. Streaming platforms also changed the equation for independent artists who now find it easier to publish their songs and get them heard by an audience without needing the blessings of a big label. Most of the streaming platforms allow their listeners free access to their library of songs. Some offer premium services like building your own playlist, ad-free listening and accessing favorites even without an internet connection for a fraction of a cost. With free access to thousands of old and new songs on a seamless, user-friendly platform the problems of pirated music seem to be on a decline.

Levelling the playing field

This is a different age for both music consumers and creators. While a majority of the revenue of the music streaming platforms are driven through advertisements, the artists who upload their music get only a miniscule amount. Besides the name and the fame associated with artists, only a few can make this into a career that actually pays. Digitization has definitely created more avenues for artists and disrupted the sector but more is needed so that the playing field is levelled and more opportunities created

Note about the author:

Sabera Patni is a leading HR practitioner who is also a diversity champion and her love for music led her to start her journey as a singer, song writer and composer. She can be reached on her Instagram handle @therealsabra.

Coming up...
1. The rise of the independent artist
2. Regional content is the 'in' thing
3. The Podcast – the podcasting game
4. Audio is the next big thing

A MAVERICK EDUCATOR & A DOYEN OF THE SOCIETY

A CONVERSATION WITH **DR. MADHU CHITKARA**
–PRO CHANCELLOR, CHITKARA UNIVERSITY.

It has been the good fortune of all those who came under the chieftaincy of Dr. Madhu Chitkara, the doyen of teachers and the living example of a true academician in our society. A woman, whose journey is not only stunning, but also conveys, how a human being can realise their exceptional abilities and be a winner. A story of a mathematics teacher in a government school who made a mark in life by defying all cultural odds to be the Pro Chancellor of a University. A woman of substance who looked at the bright side of life, and stoically endured the lows. An entrepreneur, an educator and a philanthropist who built Chitkara University, North India's most outstanding educational Institution with grit and mettle. As a co-founder, she is the soul of Chitkara constituting more than 15000 students and 1000 faculty members. She has been acknowledged with 25+ awards both at the state and central level for her strenuous efforts. She won the Lifetime Achievement Gold Medal Award in 2004. Her case study on Entrepreneurship is published by Washington School of Business in 2013 and she was adjudged as Winner of Women Entrepreneur Award in South Asia. In an exclusive chat with Sumeer Walia she shares about Chitkara's Core, its values, society at large and her deep rooted vision of education.

Q&A

Q1. Being a leader, How have you personally taken the challenge of this pandemic situation and kept your team motivated and going?

I have always mentored my team to look for opportunities in challenges. When we were caught unaware in the pandemic situation, our resilient setup came handy. I was in regular communication with my leadership team and promised to extend all support. Together, we made sure that our students do not suffer, we instilled faith in them to overcome these tough times. Our robust technological setup and extremely dedicated IT team made us sail through these challenging times and I am glad that we had the efficacy to move completely online in a very short time.

Q2. Do you miss the Classroom and to teach? What has changed?

Yes, definitely. Teaching is where I started my journey and it's been the food for my soul, so I do miss it a lot, goes without saying. Now, times have changed, my role has changed. The teaching methodology has changed, the story telling has changed and the technology infusion has brought new era of teaching. It's the teachers who better understand that leaders and great people are born out of classrooms.

Q3. Dr. Chitkara, Kindly share a few Core strengths of your University and how they have contributed to make Chitkara University a National level player in education?

Our core values are our driving force. Our 12-point charter is our gatekeeper. Our vision and mission gives the required impetus and direction to move forward with grit and conviction. Our core strengths and and our stake holders are: our faculty, our students and our industry partners. We cherish our relationships with all three. Collaboration has been the key and we have believed in the spirit of culture, ethos in education and natural bonhomie.

Q6. People call you a Philanthropist who has changed many lives, more than a Million students have gone through your mentoring, what inspires you to do good for others?

My inner self and my unmoving faith in God inspires me. The smiles on my students' faces give me inner strength and makes me feel connected with them. When you create opportunities for others, it's a different kind of satisfaction you get, I always enjoy supporting local communities and creating sustainable models.

For her endeavours, Dr. Madhu Chitkara has been felicitated with

Q4. What is your vision on Entrepreneurship and Research for your University?

Entrepreneurship is the only attribute that stays with a person for whole life. If our education system can inculcate that attribute in our students, rest everything will fall in place. We need to make all efforts in that direction. Research pedagogy gives depth to the education system, while entrepreneurship gives breadth. I strongly believe in doing responsible research and foster entrepreneurship on campus.

Q7. Youth of India is going through turbulent times, weakening mental health is an area of concern and the figures are alarming, drugs, unemployment, gender biasness, parental pressure etc. what are your tips on improving mental health and having a better pedigree of Youth?

The long term answer to the problem is - a close knit family. A child's first school is his/her family. If parenting is set correct, these issues will not arise. However, since this solution cannot be brought into practice overnight, here are some tips: The children should be raised with unconditional love. They should be taught to be happy rather than being successful. Running after success is the root cause of all the problems slated in the question. If the work is your hobby or vice versa, issues related to mental health will not arise.

Q5. What are the opportunities you see for Chitkara at a National and at an International stage?

I believe that the opportunities should be looked at local level, however the endeavours should be of global standards. We never take up an opportunity for the sake of visibility, but to make a difference to somebody near us, or globally. We have done pretty well Nationally and Internationally. With over 200 Global universities as our partners, we look forward to joint academic collaborations, curriculum sharing and working on collaborative research and pro innovations. I am happy to share that we rank in top 100 by NIRF, our business school is ranked in top 75 in the country. Over 800 students from Chitkara in last five years have got international exposure through articulations, internships, joint research, semester & cultural exchange programs in various partner countries mainly, Australia, Taiwan, USA, Germany, Canada, France.

Q8. What are your thoughts on freedom of speech through social media platforms, do you think social media is boon or bane?

Social media today is a necessary evil. As technology has invaded our lives and will never go away, so is the social media. If used in a matured manner Social media is a boon, if not-it, surely, is bane.

Q9. . If you had unlimited power, what is the one change you will bring for good in the Education system of our Country?

I would use my unlimited power (if it were) to inculcate in my students the skill to unlearn, introduce in the system, the radical process on how to unlearn. Strike a fine balance between learning, relearning and unlearning.

* State Sward for Teachers in 1987
* International Achiever's Award (Women Entrepreneur) in 2009
* "Women Edupreneurs Awards" in 2013 & 2014 by Engineering Watch
* "Visionary Edupreneurs" by Shree Pranab Mukharjee, Former President of India
* "The Lifestyle Women's Achiever's" Award 2019 by The Third Eye Media Group
* "SheThePower" award by Birla TMT Steel Pvt. Ltd.
* "Women in Education" award in 2020 by The Economic Times, Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd
* "10 Most Admired Women in Educational Sector" for Year 2018 by The Knowledge Review Magazine

Finishing Schools
New trend in Higher Education

Quality workforce feeds and nourishes industries and augments the economy's growth. Therefore, there is a need to create a pool of skilled manpower, who can be directly absorbed by the Industry. India's higher education system, which is supposed to provide skilled manpower to Industry, is out-of-sync with market needs. It offers dormant knowledge and fails to meet the requirement of the corporate world.

Dr. AP Achar
CEO, AIC NITTE Incubation Centre

What is taught is the class room is not practised in the Industry and what is practised in the Industry is taught in the classroom. Therefore the largest pools of young graduates passing out of the educational institutions are unemployed due to employability. Due to this labour market in India, we are facing a paradoxical situation. Even though plenty of workers are available in the labour market, their skills are not meeting the requirements of the Industry. In the present situation, if industries hire fresh graduates, they need to be trained for 8- 10 months to make them productive. So for the first **8 months** post recruitment, employees are not productive for the company.

Because of the severe competition, the corporate sector today needs first-day first-hour productive employees. The graduates willing to work are found by employers generally lacking the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities needed for new generation jobs. This has resulted in vast unemployment. Despite widespread unemployment, various sectors of the Indian industry are facing a shortage of skilled labour.

This paradoxical situation has emerged over a period of time due to the faulty system in Indian Higher education. Indian Higher Education system has three major players viz (1) corporates (2) Governments and (3) Educational Institutions.

All these three players are working in isolation. Corporates have no time to interact with Institutions to tell them the requirements of the Industry; Educational Institutions are interested only in Return on their investment; Regulatory bodies instead of framing policies for making Industry and institutes to work hand in hand, are busy only in enforcing outdated policies for regulating higher education. As a solution to these problems in the Indian Higher Education system, to prepare readymade candidates, who can start contributing on the first day of their requirement in the company, new institutions called Finishing Schools are emerging in the labour market. "Finishing Schools" are becoming popular in India to link the education to employment by developing employability.

According to All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) finishing school is a private school for students that emphasizes on training for developing all round personality, skill, knowledge and ability required by the Industry. The finishing schools aim to provide both technical and soft skills to students to facilitate their employability and play a part in the industry's supply-side issues. Finishing School programmes are designed to develop the employability of the fresh students coming from different disciplines. It is interesting to observe that a good number of finishing schools are emerging in India. The biggest advantage of these finishing schools is that these schools cut down the the "deployable time" for a company.

Due to unprecedented changes happening in the Indian economy due to globalization and liberalization there is a need for a new breed of business education in our country aimed at developing a new generation of business leaders, who can walk into organizations and start contributing from their day one in the company. Responding to these needs, Management Institutes in India are increasingly becoming popular as finishing schools to develop young graduates' employability. Major components of Training in Management education are: Leadership Development, Job Skills Business Communications, Group Dynamics, Business Ethics, Life Values, Essential Know-How, Business Skills, Managerial Skills, Persuasion, Negotiation Skills, Self Esteem, Attitude etc.

As Management Institutes train students in developing employability skills, many companies recruit students directly from the Management Institute for entry-level managerial positions, and campus recruitment has become the most popular recruitment source. Due to this trend Management Institutes are becoming gateways for gainful employment and MBA has become one of the most glamorous Masters degree programme and management graduates are paid more than other graduates

Today, around **300 Management Institutions** in India claim that they provide **100 % placement** to students. These Institutions admit students through CAT, and during the course of study, students will be in a rat race to get employment. Sad part of the story is that due to the rat race many a times, students actually behave like rats. Therefore, management institutes shall inculcate values and ethics among the students during the study period and develop employability skills.

MORE THAN EVER...
NIFO LEADERSHIP
IS NEEDED NOW!

The Covid pandemic has changed the way we live and work, and it has been very revealing to businesses in one big way: It has shown you the strength of your company's leadership!

With so many people working from home now, I have heard leaders say: **"how do I know if my people are working?" and "Is there a way I can monitor their computers to see what they are doing?"**

Now, are these the questions of leaders or micromanagers?

Your leaders may have been comfortable for a long time micromanaging their team around them. However, the pandemic has pushed them out of their comfort zones and into even stronger micromanagement or into reflecting that there has to be a better way.

Also, your people working from home are having their own challenges. They have a day packed with their own work, online meetings, and maybe even home schooling for their children...all at the same time (and maybe even with both parents working at home too!).

The better way is through **NIFO Leadership (Nose In, Fingers Out).**

It starts with you moving away from trying to control all the activities, and to empowering your people to OWN the outcomes to be delivered. Instead of managing what activities have been completed, you focus on monitoring the progress and achievement of the outcomes. Remember, at a distance you cannot see the activities your people are doing, you can only monitor the progress they are making on the achievement of the outcomes.

With so much going on each day for your people working at home, you need to empower them to manage their own activities in ways to achieve the outcomes you have delegated to them.

Therefore, the first step is for you to clearly communicate the outcomes to delivered and by when! Clear outcomes, not just activities enable you to lead NIFO (Nose In, Fingers Out) and keep your people feeling ownership for the achievement (whether they are at home or at the office).

Nose In

Your power as a leader comes from your questions, and your nose in at the milestones ensures your team is making the right progress on delivering the outcomes. Here's a great reflection question for you to ask yourself at the end of each week: "Was I surprised by something I should have known because my nose wasn't in?".

Fingers Out

You need to restrain yourself from putting your fingers in and providing your people the easy answers; and that prevents your people from thinking and growing too. Also, they will never take as much ownership for your answers, as they would their own. Therefore, instead of giving the answers, ask the questions. If your people can't see their answer on their own through your questions, then use a story or example to help your people see the right way forward.

Another great reflection question to ask yourself at the end of each week:

"Am I having to give the answer too often to some of my people?"

This might indicate that you have some people afraid or unwilling to take personal responsibility.

Why do leaders not lead NIFO and micromanage when they know they shouldn't?

Because they have learned to feel in control by knowing everything that is going on, and thought their role as the leader was to have all the answers.

Your role as a leader is to not have all the answers, but to have the right questions. This enables you to move away from feeling in control through knowing it all...to feeling in control by trusting your people.

Micromanagement	NIFO Leadership
Fingers In is the main focus	Nose In, Fingers Out is the main focus
Delegate activities	Delegate outcomes
Ask about completed activities	Ask about progress and achievement
Provide answers and prevent thinking	Use questions to encourage thinking
Talks all the time and gives instructions	Listens to have their people feel valued
Team doing it for you (your ideas)	Team doing it for themselves (their ideas)
Feeling of control by knowing everything	Feeling of control by trusting people
Team speed based on your capacity	Team speed based on the team's capacity
Make all the decisions to avoid risk	Delegate decisions to create more value
Micromanagers grow more micromanagers	NIFO Leaders grow more NIFO leaders

NIFO Leadership is really front-loaded work. You focus on making the outcomes to be delivered clear up-front and then with your nose in you ask questions for your people to uncover their own how. Micromanagement is then back-loaded work. Since you haven't done the up-front work, you now have to be around all the time to answer your people's questions so they know what to do next (always fingers in).

As all this make so much sense, so why doesn't your company have more NIFO leaders?

NIFO Leadership requires more thought, as you decide up-front how you will communicate and delegate the outcomes, and how you will put your nose in to ensure the outcomes delivered on time. Micromanagement requires less thought, as you didn't decide to delegate outcomes and only instruct your people on activities; and your job sort of "comes to you"...with all your people's questions asking you what they should be doing next. Your fingers are always in.

NIFO Leadership (Nose In, Fingers Out) is the way to move away from micromanagement, and from telling to asking (Nose In), from talking to listening (Fingers Out) and from slowing your team to leveraging the potential within your team.

To successfully lead through the pandemic and use the full potential within your team (wherever they are located), you and your company's leaders need to be more Nose In, Fingers Out.

About the Author : Mark Fritz

Mark mentors executives to lead a global business to thrive without them, and has spoken on leadership and the power of ownership in over 50 countries throughout the world. He has lived and worked in the USA, Singapore, Egypt, Netherlands, Italy, Japan and the UK, and now calls London his home.
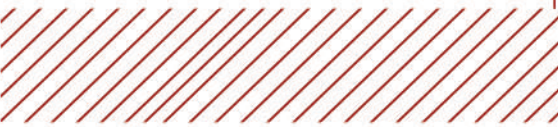
AI & AR Technology Democratize Autism Intervention

Meenakshi Kumar
Director & Co-Founder, CognitiveBotics

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior. Although autism can be diagnosed at any age, it is said to be a "developmental disorder" because symptoms generally appear in the first two years of life. Early intervention and continued support are key to enable the autistic individuals to lead a meaningful and productive life in society, dealing with the people and situations that they face in daily life. The therapies constitute multiple disciplines and can be summarized in below diagram. The technologies used for respective therapy discipline is enclosed in the parenthesis.
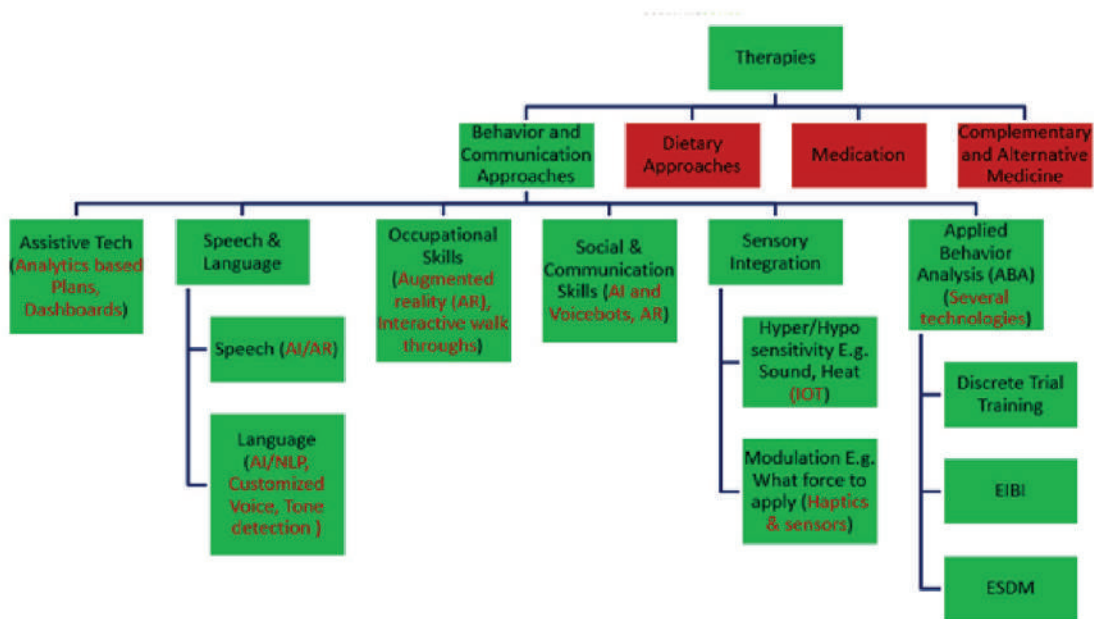
The application with multiple technologies under the hood, augments therapist to make it easier for kids with autism to learn.
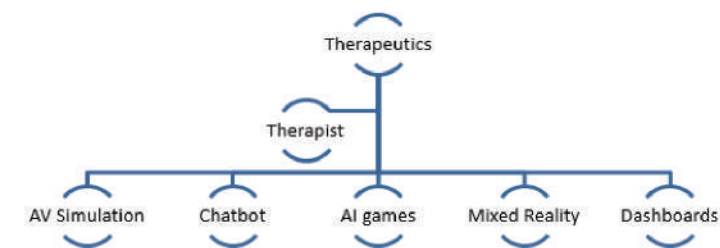
For example voice bots help build conversational skills, Eye tracking technologies improve eye contact, Customized voice can mimic parents voice to give additional comfort kids. One of the anecdote on how technology helps is, a UK based Indian Kid (~5 years old) with autism was in India during covid time. She used Cognitivebotics tool for couple of hours only and one of the personalization feature is calling kid by name by the computer. Later she responded by providing her name 5 times in a row, which parents said it never happened before and were very happy.

Cognitivebotics product being developed from Hyderabad India, using patent pending digital technologies and caters to autistic individuals over internet. It aims to provide them with early intervention, along with continued support throughout their life as needed. This is provided online through specific modules and skill-based training. These are delivered online and are monitored to chart the progress of the individual and predict suitable path of learning. These have been developed using latest technologies in Artificial Intelligence, Natural Language Processing, Audio Video Simulation and Augmented Reality, in collaboration with doctors and therapists who specialize in Autism Spectrum Disorders. With this, it is believed that they will have access to 24x7 quality therapeutic support that augments their existing medical support system. Early results from small case studies in India indicate positive feedback from parents about kids progress and currently also being tested in other countries.

1. **Affordablity** - Reduces cost of intervention

2. **Ubiquity** - Available where Internet is available globally (especially true in Covid times)

3. **Time savings** - Parents do not need to haul child to class often

4. **Just in Time Practice** - Child can Practice before facing situation

5. **Analytics based dashboard:** Provide skill-wise progress against time axis

6. **Computer is less judging** – Autistic children are very sensitive to other's feelings and come in the way of learning. Child feels comfortable as computer is less judging

Dr Harini Atturu, UK experienced Psychiatrist , advisor to Cognitivebotics said " This product being developed, co-founded by parents of successful autistic person & socially conscious investors, aims to convert an individual who would be a tax burden to the society, into a potential tax paying contributor to the society." . Meenakshi (meenakshi.kumar@cognitivebotics.net), mother, said "We use multiple patent pending technologies & want to help parents around the globe with this product".

A PARADIGM SHIFT IN HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY THROUGH BIG DATA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Human Genome Project completed in the year 2003 sequenced the entire human genome and generated enormous amounts of data. Decoding this genetic information provided an insight on gene locations and mutations that led to great advancements in genetic screening, testing and molecular medicine. Cutting-edge biological techniques developed over the last few decades has led to collection of countless terabytes of data that requires a high level of computing for its analysis. Similarly, analysing and leveraging health care data from patient records, clinical data, investigations, health insurance companies, pharmaceutical research has resulted in extensive and complex data that cannot be understood by traditional means of data processing. This large amount of data generated is essentially known as **Big Data**. Computational analysis is essential to identify patterns, associations, and trends in this data. Powerful software and analytical tools are now being built to analyse this information and solve complex biological problems. The usage of Big Data is becoming vital for leading companies. The main aim is to convert this raw data into useful, actionable information towards a value-based healthcare focused at reducing costs and increasing efficiencies. This proves to be the future of medicine equipped with automated labs providing on the spot results at an affordable price. Hence, the pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are laying their feet in this digital revolution of healthcare.

Developing a drug requires a huge amount of capital as investments and a commitment of about a decade in research. Advanced computational techniques are now increasingly being applied to accelerate this process by understanding the underlying mechanism and predicting its effects on the human body. This widespread use of computational techniques in viral research have created several milestones such as the interpretation of the viral genome and in turn accelerating the process of vaccine development over the past year of the pandemic.

These techniques lent a helping hand in identifying the sequencing errors, evolutionary relationship, genetic variations, putative drug candidates against SARS-CoV-2 viral genes within a short span of time. Medical imaging data like X-rays and CT scans can be fed to AI programs to detect and discover unique patterns and anomalies. These algorithms can interpret imaging data just as a highly trained radiologist. AI tools can also be used in precision medicine where treatment is personalized for an individual based on their medical history, lifestyle choices, genetic data, and evolving pathological tests. Algorithms are being developed to provide patients instant answers to health-related queries and concerns while guiding them on how to deal with any potential problems. This can help in automation of primary care facilities, allowing doctors to focus on other crucial and serious cases. Additionally, the healthcare system is being digitised by introducing features such as Health tracking in order to keep a record of test reports and other statistical data.

These developments not only reduce the operational and maintenance cost but also prevents human errors. Keeping patients healthy and avoiding illness stands at the front of any priority list. Consumer products like the Fitbit activity tracker and the Apple Watch keep tab on the physical activity levels of individuals and can also report on specific health-related trends based on data collected from hundreds of millions of users worldwide.

However, there are certain drawbacks to rely on these techniques. The predictions are based on the data fed to the system, any bias in data can lead to less accurate predictions. One of the biggest risks in healthcare is that the system might suggest a wrong treatment or make an error in reading a radiology scan, which could lead to dire consequences. The other concern is collection of huge datasets and the exchange of data between systems may lead to violation of patient's privacy.

> " While this technology has its shortcomings, it can aid in lowering healthcare costs & deliver superior patient experiences, treatments, and outcomes. "

Ketaki Ghatole

ROBOTIC ESOPHAGECTOMY

Some limitations of the laparoscopic and thoracoscopic approaches to esophagectomy include instrumentation, the narrow field of the mediastinum, and the two-dimensional view of conventional equipment. Robotic systems provide the possibility to overcome some of these limitations. Some groups have reported their early experience with robotically assisted THE.This involves laparoscopic gastric mobilization, mediastinal robotic dissection, and conventional transhiatal dissection through the cervical incision. This technique allows three-dimensional visualization, improved magnification, and a greater range of instrument motion. This potentially could diminish intraoperative complications during the esophageal dissection in the mediastinum.

At Apollo Hospitals, we have begun to utilize this technology in our approach to esophagectomy. The robotic technique can be performed during the thoracic dissection of the esophagus, gastric mobilization, and intrathoracic anastomosis. It can also be performed in combination with laparoscopic, hand-assisted laparoscopic, or thoracoscopic approaches. For the robotic abdominal approach, **three 8-mm ports** are placed, one in the right subcostal location and two in the left subcostal position. The camera is placed in the supraumbilical position and a **10-mm assistant port** is placed in the right paramedian location. The laparoscopic approach has a similar location as the ports (with the **8-mm ports** exchanged for **5-mm ports**), and only one is placed in the right subcostal and one is placed in the left subcostal region. The assistant and camera ports are in the same location. Two additional **5-mm trocars** are placed in the left subcostal and left paramedian locations. The feeding jejunostomy is brought out through a port site on the left for all approaches, thus eliminating an additional incision.

After insufflation is performed, the abdomen is inspected for evidence of metastatic or locally unresectable disease. The stomach is mobilized away from its vascular attachments, protecting the right gastroepiploic pedicle. The short gastric vessels are transected using a Harmonic scalpel. The left gastric vessels are dissected down to the origin of the celiac artery and transected using a vascular stapler to complete the upper abdominal lymphadenectomy. The gastric conduit is created using several firings of the surgical stapler. A feeding jejunostomy tube is placed through one of the left abdominal trocar sites. The patient is then placed in the left lateral decubitus position and the right lung is deflated.

The thorax is entered into the fifth intercostal space using a 10-mm port. Two additional ports are placed, one in the ninth intercostal space (4-cm incision to be shared by the assistant and one of the robot arms) and another in the third intercostal space. The azygos vein is isolated and transected using a vascular stapler. The esophagus is meticulously dissected en bloc with surrounding mediastinal lymph nodes. The specimen is removed and margins are checked with pathology. The final intrathoracic anastomosis has been described with a variety of stapled vs sewn techniques.The anastomotic leak rate (0%–9.8%) with this new technique is comparable with other stapled technique.An omental pedicle flap is then placed over the anastomosis.

MIE Outcomes

As surgical techniques improve, incidence of intraoperative complications could potentially decrease. MIE is a technically advanced surgical procedure with a prolonged learning curve. Technical complications are known to be operator-, technique-, and instrument-dependent. It has been reported that a minimum of 17 cases were necessary to acquire MIE skills, and more than 35 cases were needed to see an outcomes difference. In theory, obviating the need of a thoracotomy, laparotomy, or both may reduce postoperative pain, wound infections, ventilator dependence, cardiopulmonary complications, ICU and hospital stays, and mortality rates. One of the most controversial issues with MIE is whether its disease-free and overall survival rates are comparable with conventional surgery. The role of MIE in esophageal cancer has been questioned because the extent of lymphadenectomy may be compromised. Nevertheless, the largest randomized trial comparing open approaches proved no significant difference in survival between THE and TTE with extended en-bloc lymphadenectomy.

Conclusions

Dr. Chinnababu Sunkavalli
Surgical Oncology
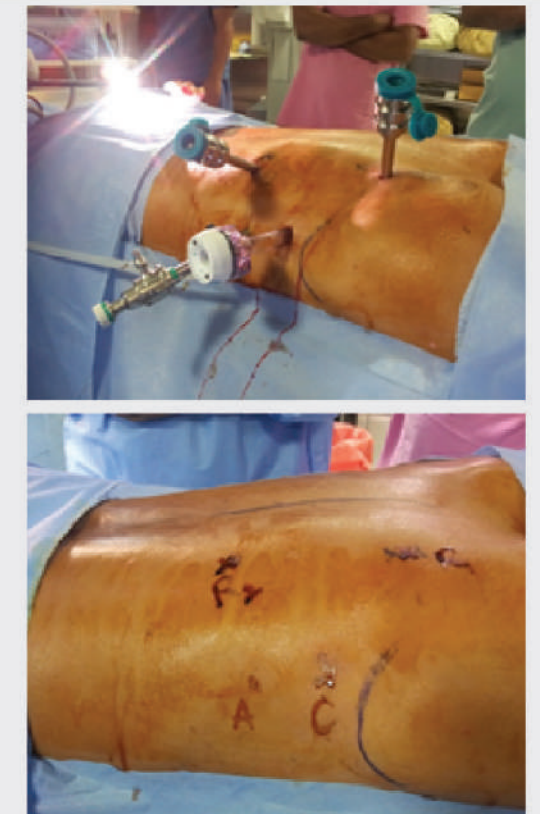
Several minimally invasive esophagectomy (MIE) techniques have been described and represent safe alternatives for the surgical management of esophageal cancer in centers with high volume and surgeons experienced in MIE. In larger series, MIE has proven to have equivalent postoperative morbidity and mortality rates to open esophagectomy. MIE has also been associated with less blood loss, less postoperative pain, and shorter length of stay in the intensive care unit and hospital. Robotic approaches may offer advantages over conventional approaches to MIE.

However, similar to MIE, these techniques should be performed at high-volume centers by surgeons who have sufficient experience with the open and MIE techniques.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE YEARS HELPING BUSINESS TRANSFORM TOWARDS
DIGITALIZATION

SURESH CHERUKU
MATILDA CLOUD CEO

It's more than 20 years I'm in the IT industry and my focus has always been to explore new technologies and capitalize on opportunities to drive organizational growth and generate multimillion-dollar revenue. I believe the core of the business is building strong and lasting relationships—be it with customers, partners, investors, or other stakeholders. In order to make a business successful, it requires cultivating collaborative workplace environments, establishing excellent cohesion among cross-functional teams with a focus on effective resource management and people development.

The requirement for digital transformation has always been there. But it was never a mandate for enterprises of all sectors. But the pandemic has made a difference. Digital transformation and cloud are not a choice anymore. Companies have realized that it is difficult to re-align their business and operating models to the rapidly changing business landscape without digital transformation. Therefore, we've noticed that there's a renewed sense of urgency to transform business models and invoke necessary changes. In fact, it will not be exaggerated to state that the COVID-19 crisis has brought about years of change in the way companies in all sectors and regions do business.

Over the last couple of years, Matilda Cloud has been playing a very crucial role in digital transformation journey for enterprises across verticals. At Matilda Cloud, we build the most innovative and unified suite of tools for Cloud Transformation, Management, and Optimization. Our goal is to partner with a diverse set of industry experts, thought leaders, and hands-on practitioners; and enable them to deliver industry-leading results for Enterprises using cutting-edge technology, expertise, and proven best practices

We work with leading technology and cloud platform partners to deliver best-in-class service offering to our clients. We co-create solutions to provide efficient and effective services by developing, implementing, and managing world-class, cloud-ready, secure, and agile IT Infrastructure solutions. Our close relationship with major cloud providers such as AWS, Azure, Google, and Oracle enables us to offer the best cloud management features.

As a business leader, my vision has been to ensure a seamless digital transformation experience so that we can take the company to a new height. Under my leadership, Matilda Cloud has risen from a start-up to a successful company and is now one of the prestigious cloud product suite and digital transformation enablers in the world. My prior experience in a variety of executive positions spanning marketing, sales, product development, and business strategy with leading tech companies such as Oracle, Infosys, Tech Mahindra etc., has acted as a catalyst behind this quick success.

During my tenure as a CEO at Matilda Cloud, I became extremely passionate about our partners, growing their business, and helping businesses achieve more, and I promise to continue this commitment. I look forward to deepening the relationships within our partner ecosystem and helping us all succeed together.

Talking about our Matilda Cloud Product suite, we've everything that an enterprise requires for its cloud transformation journey. From discovery to analyzing and monitoring, to optimizing we help companies with an integrated cloud-agnostic AI-driven platform that enriches cloud journey in the ever-evolving digital transformation race. And to deliver this state-of-the-art

EXPERIENCE, THE PLATFORM COMPRISES 5 CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCTS:

Matilda Discovery – Matilda's Discovery product helps analyze application dependencies and workload performance and offers a full hierarchical view of the application and its dependencies that will help facilitate easy migration, asset management, and any compliance needs.

Matilda Migrate – It creates a simple and effective way of migrating your legacy application to the Cloud or new-age framework so that you can manage the cost, time, and resources of legacy overhead.

Matilda AIOps – Our AIOps product helps you deal with the challenges of delivering uninterrupted digital business, whether it is On-Prem, Hybrid, or Public Cloud. It embeds AI into every aspect of operations and generates real-time insights, performs proactive monitoring, and delivers deep performance intelligence automated by machine learning.

Matilda DevSecOps – Use the pre-defined templates to optimize and jumpstart automation and get an edge with DevOps performance metrics to identify bottlenecks and eliminate redundancies.

Matilda Optimize – Matilda's Cloud cost optimization enables ongoing cost management of assets used in each application in the Cloud. It ensures that you can maximize cost by a smart distribution of workloads ensuring non-critical elements are turned off as needed and turned back on in a dynamic fashion.

The pandemic has validated the value proposition of Cloud and Gartner also projects that worldwide public cloud spending by end-users will grow 18 percent next year to **$304.9 billion, up from $257.5 billion this year**. This means, we have a tremendous opportunity for growth ahead of us and we are well poised to grab this opportunity with our all hands.

Reference Links:

https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-11-17-gartner-forecasts-worldwide-public-cloud-end-user-spending-to-grow-18-percent-in-2021

Email Marketing in 2021, a shift from conversion to conversation.

2020 has been a year of reinvention and changed the outlook in our overall thinking. Last year was a challenging battleground for marketers; however, as a German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche's said, "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger."

Today, marketers have begun to introspect ways to do things differently. We need to pay heed that email is no longer just about customer acquisition and transactions; it is about conversation and retention.

A mindset shift from "what I want to send?" to "what they need right now?"

With the absence of an end date to the pandemic, we're noticing great movements in email marketing, positively changing the landscape for the times to come. According to The Netcore Benchmark Report, 77 percent of marketers prefer to use email to communicate with their customers.

"We strongly believe that after a tough and unprecedented year, email marketing, in comparison to any other marketing channels, can support brands to achieve their goals in 2021 and beyond."

Here are the top trends to help you redefine your email experience and provide your customers with value.

Smarter inboxing and better customer experience with AI:

Inbox is the busiest marketplace on earth. Every email dreams to see itself in the inbox. Inboxing is a combination of many things done right. Reputation, engagement, data, and content. AI will impact three significant areas in email marketing: Content optimization, Delivery optimization, Data segmentation.

AI makes inboxing smarter by bringing predictive engagement, adaptive sending, and time-optimized sending.

On the off chance that your email marketing instrument isn't prepared to do this for you, it's time you look at forward-looking email platforms like Netcore. (At first, I decided I would not pitch, consider this as an exception.)

Improved adoption of AMP to elevate engagement:

Email is evolving fast in the last few years. From being a static platform to an engaging and storytelling channel. What are the odds that your email can behave like a web page, and your user wouldn't have to visit any other site on their devices to complete a purchase?

AMP empowers to do that. AMP stands for Accelerated Mobile Pages, and it enables your email communication to be more interactive by elements like carousels, accordions, and purchase buttons. Subscribers can also RSVP to occasions, leave and resolve remarks, fill out questionnaires, place orders, and more, all from inside the email.

AMP's implementation has been slow this year due to the complexity of creating AMP emails (HTML). With the advent of new tools that help create AMP emails easily, higher adoption is expected in 2021.

One thing for sure is your email performance can scale to 2X with AMP-enabled emails.

Building trust through BIMI:

2020 taught marketers that discounts wouldn't bring users back, but brand equity will. Brands are building more conversation and trust with their subscribers. BIMI enhances that trust in the mailbox.

BIMI, or Brand Indicators for Message Identification, is a new standard that allows you to display your brands logo in supported mailbox providers.

Currently, Yahoo mail supports it, and Gmail is pilot testing the solutions. Other Mailbox providers have also expressed interest in using BIMI for their customers. BIMI gives more authenticity to brands by building trust in email with strong authentication. With a high focus on authentication, brand equity, and creating a great experience in 2021, BIMI becomes an essential element in emails.

If BIMI goes into production for Gmail, many brands will adopt this quickly, and it will become a default standard like SPF, DKIM, DMARC. Get started on your authentication configuration now, so you'll be ready in 2021.
You can check your SPF, DKIM, DMARC, and BIMI record on our free tool **grademyemail.co**

## Email for stories and conversation:

Every email can make a difference if sent to touch the heart of a user. Marketers were creative and conversational last year, and the trend continues. Brands shared more stories to lift consumers' spirits.

> **"P**eople don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe. **"**
>
> – Simon Sinek.

Brands used email to connect with their customer on a personal level and hence, build warm relationships. More conversation led to healthy brand equity and better recall during conversions.

So focus on enhanced storytelling, creativity, and innovation in your emails. Subscribers are more likely to entertain the next few emails if they found your previous story (email) worth their time.
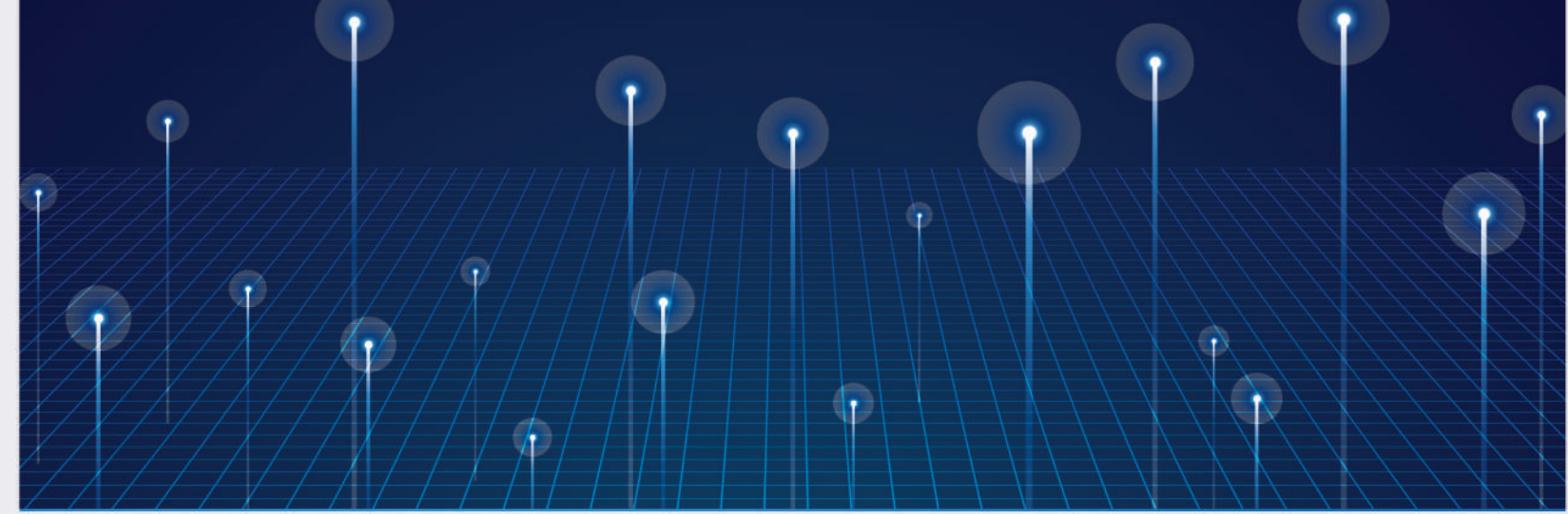
Move beyond the fundamentals:

If you're still using basic personalization, demographic segmentation, and high-tech email tools to get your email marketing right, hang on, you might just be scratching the surface.

Segmentation has moved beyond simple demographics. Today, it's all about leveraging smart segments. Smart segments are an AI-enabled feature that identifies hidden patterns from demographics and behavioral customer data that is tough to locate manually.

For example, my friend in Canada received a Thanksgiving email on Nov 26, 2020, while Thanksgiving in Canada was on Oct 12, 2020. Not the ideal experience for your Canadian subscribers.

Real personalization has moved beyond just names and images."Personalization is about understanding the dreams, hopes, and motivation of your customers."
In the end, you have to move beyond fundamentals to stay relevant and authentic.

Email Marketing is the marketer's favorite channel in 2021. You have to reply on conversations with your subscribers to uplift your value in their eyes. Conversions will follow.

Being authentic is the way to communicate with your users now. To ensure you're relevant, you have to rely on advanced email marketing tools. Your email program should give human experience at scale, and that is possible using AI.

Tanishq Juneja

I hope that some of these trends will become an essential part of your email program in 2021. You can reach me to share more trends that no one is talking about   tanishq@pepipost.com.

LOW CODE PLATFORMS:
THE FUTURE OF SOFTWARE DELIVERY
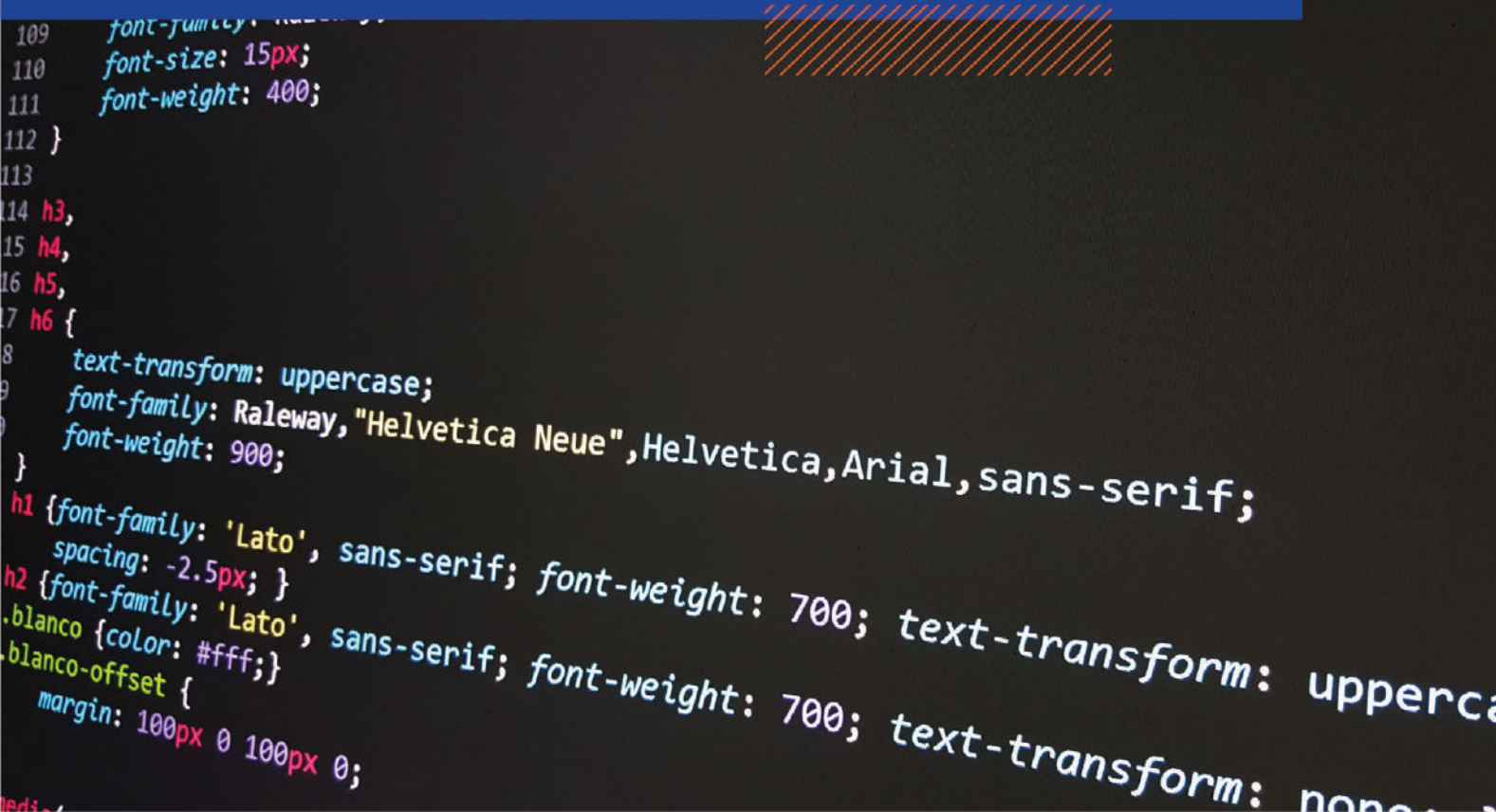
Low code platform is relatively simple approach that is been used by many businesses today to build applications with ease. It is considered as the future change as far as business agility is concerned. CIOs are beginning to marvel and they once had a quarter of a million dollar budget and a team of **15 to 20** developers working for half a year to build an enterprise application.

That's because they can now develop the same application with same quality or even better quality at a tenth of the original cost and ten times faster with a low code/no code platform. More relieved than the CIO or the IT folks are the business teams, who had been accusing IT teams of being too slow in releasing the applications in time.

Yes, low code/no code is here to stay, and it is disrupting the application delivery putting digital transformation projects into high gear.

But first, here's quick exploration of what we mean by low code/no code. As the name suggests, a low code platform helps build an application with minimal coding with drag and drop graphical user interface.

Gartner sees low code as the evolution of rapid application development (RAD) to cloud and SaaS models. No code, of course, is about building a functional app that would be perfectly suitable for 'citizen developers' or business users who have minimal knowledge of programming languages.

However, Gartner categorizes no code as a low-code application platform (LCAP) that requires text entry for formulae or simple expressions. **"Furthermore, "no code"** is not a sufficient criterion for tasks like citizen development, as many complex tooling configuration tasks are no code but still require specialist skills, **"** notes Gartner. (See Table 1).

Table 1. Low-Code Development Technologies Revenue (Millions of U.S. Dollars)	2019	2020	2021
Low-Code Application Platforms (LCAP)	3,473.5	4,448.2	5,751.6
Intelligent Business Process Management Suites	2,509.7	2,694.9	2,891.6
Multi experience Development Platforms (MDXP)	1,583.5	1,931.0	2,326.9
Robotic Process Automation (RPA)	1,184.5	1,686.0	2,187.4
Citizen Automation and Development Platform (CADP)	341.8	438.7	579.5
Other Low-Code Development (LCD) Technologies*	59.6	73.4	87.3
Overall	**9,152.6**	**11,272.2**	**13,824.2**

*Other LCD technologies include rapid mobile app development (RMAD) tools and rapid application development (RAD) tools. Low-code is the evolution of RAD to cloud and SaaS models. Note that Gartner defines a no-code application platform as an LCAP that only requires text entry for formulae or simple expressions. The LCAP market, therefore, includes no-code platforms. Furthermore, "no code" is not a sufficient criterion for tasks like citizen development, as many complex tooling configuration tasks are no code but still require specialist skills. Columns may not add to totals shown because of rounding. Source: Gartner (February 2021)

Drudgery out, innovation in! Low code/no code application platforms have the power to create enterprise grade applications and are easy to use by even citizen developers looking to build functional apps. Much like using Lego blocks to create toy buildings or airplanes and objects, components and APIs can be combined and rearranged and tested to build a high-quality application. It takes out all the repetitive part of creating code and leaves the developer to focus on applications without writing single line of code.

Why the buzz around low code platforms?

Low code technologies have been around for decades –from the **"proto"** low- code WIMP (Windows, Icons, Menus and Pointers) which was a rudimentary graphical user interface to RAD, BPM, RPA etc. They have different capabilities across different products.

But in recent years, independent software vendors have been investing significantly in developing low code/no code platforms that bring together the ability to build both enterprise-level applications and simple functional ones. In addition, the versatile tools work across platforms.

The popularity of low code technologies is reflected in the forecasts by analysts firms. The market is expected to balloon, growing a whopping 66% to US$5.7 billion in 2021 from US$3.5 billion in 2019 (see Table 1). Forrester estimates the market to touch US$21.2 billion by 2022.

Interestingly, before the pandemic disruption set in, Forrester predicted that half of developers will be using low-code products. Thanks in part to a renewed push by Microsoft for its PowerApps, Flow, Power BI, and Power Platform products. But, of course, the Corona pandemic turned out to be the main driver. Forrester now predicts that by the end of 2021, 75% of application development will use low-code platforms, up from 44% in 2020.

The pandemic has accelerated the move to low code technologies by most of the enterprises driving them towards digitalization. If not adapted to enterprises, it wouldn't have been possible to build the millions of new apps that needed to drive digital transformation over the next five years. There had to be a faster way.

Drivers: That said, the loud buzz around low code application development is because of a confluence of factors, not the least being the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Let's look at some of these drivers.

Surge in remote applicationdevelopment:

With the pace of many enterprises transforming to digital transformation journey, it has to be revved up into a Formula 1 mode toward remote work from home in most cases pivoting the business based on the demand for faster application development. Even public sector agencies had to adopt low code because speed to value was critical to meeting the surge in demand for public services. A famous and oft-quoted example is that of New York City which built a COVID-19 crisis management software platform in a few days with a no code platform . .

Hyperautomation: During the pandemic, there was a huge surge in demand for rapid automation or hyper automation of workflows and business processes and the need to change them on the fly. The backlog of requests from business stakeholders has prompted more than 70% of commercial organizations to undertake dozens of hyperautomation initiatives as a result, says Gartner , citing hyperautomation as one of the top strategic technology trends for 2021. In an increasingly software-as-a-service world, the popularity of low code/no code technologies is inevitable.

The imperatives of agility: As enterprises manage disruptions arising from fast changing technologies and consumer behavior, they need to be flexible and agile in real-time data. That's the secret to resilience in an environment where change is the only constant. Low code/no code with its prebuilt and reusable components and modular logic fits beautifully into a world where businesses need to be fluid and able to adapt on the fly

—as **"Intelligent composable businesses "**— as Gartner terms it.

IS IT ONLY HYPE?

The simple answer is, no. Apart from the major advantage of speed to market and reduced costs (including lower hiring costs), and business agility, all of which we have explored above, there are many other reasons why low code will revolutionize software delivery.

The power of AI: If you add the AI component to the platform, as some vendors are doing, then you get a powerful solution. AI-led autonomous testing combined with a low code development platform would result in robust, secure high-quality applications.

Seamless integration: This will address concerns that low code/no code platforms cannot be leveraged for complex applications. Low code technologies can be used to applications across different platforms such as Salesforce and Oracle. APIs, connectors and CI/CD integrations enable all applications to work together seamlessly.
Modernizing applications: The necessity to build applications at speed is basically about keeping pace with the changing preferences and expectations of customers. The faster your business aligns with customer needs, the better are the chances to strengthen customer loyalty.

Providing a smooth user experience could also mean modernizing applications. Low code platforms enable modernization without disrupting business. Whether the modernization is for APIs or requires UI engineering or even architecting to a new environment (cloud native), low code platform makes it all smooth and easy with its prefab components, function-specific templates, custom integrations, plug-in, and adaptors, etc. Once the application is developed, the generated code and the UI elements (widgets, layouts, etc) can be reused thus ensuring consistency across applications. Low code technologies, it appears, could be a way to reducing technical debt.

Personalization:

Another important facet of the digital era is the extent of unprecedented personalization and customization required to stay relevant in the marketplace. This element of customer experience is also a major reason to adopt open-source low code platforms as those allow customizations. During the pandemic, enterprises that have invested in low-code platforms and other advanced technologies such as AI and automation has attained competitive advantage towards collaborative work management and has moved forward faster better than traditional development.

iSymphonyTM —Orchestrating faster app development

All the above mentioned benefits that justify the buzz around low code applications can be gained on the Innominds platform, iSymphony TM. The platform enables enterprises to create, test and deploy an enterprise-grade web or mobile application in a few days or hours, accelerating project delivery by **35- 40%.** The platform features include business modelling (helping create logical models with an intuitive drag and drop UI), UI modelling, solution templates (for industry and function verticals), and deployment of applications to cloud, leveraging cloud native solutions. It also enables CI/CD and team collaboration on the platform and integration with Agile tools like Azure DevOps.
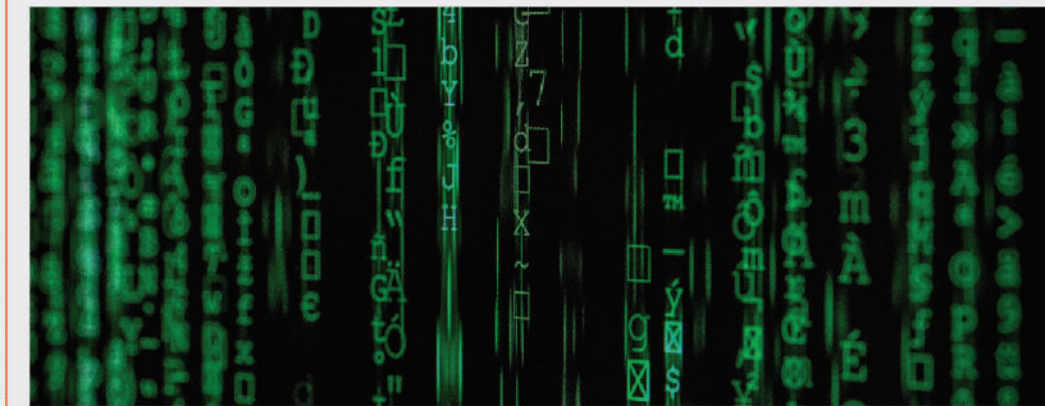
Conclusion

Low code/no code platforms are an almost indispensable part of the set of technologies and tools enterprise need in the post-COVID digital transformation era because it is the present and the future of software delivery. Without low code/no code solutions, enterprises will find it challenging to be agile, flexible, and deliver the customized experiences. So with no code strategy, organizations can build enterprise-grade applications saving both time and money and focus on the right solution.

By: Sairam Vedam, CMO - Innominds

Sairam Vedam is the Chief Marketing Officer at Innominds, a full cycle platform-led AI-first specialist software product engineering services company that helps enterprises and ISVs unlock the power of digital, working to drive their Digital Next initiatives. Sairam brings 20+ years of overall industry experience with an in-depth understanding of technologies, solutions and IP-led software services offerings. He was recognized and awarded by BBC Knowledge Series, CMO Asia, World Marketing Congress and Enterprise IT, Paul Writer from 2014-19 for demonstrating impactful global marketing leadership consistently for the last 7 years and is an external advisor with Bain & Co one of the world's leading consulting firms.

1. Next frontier in Microsoft, Google, Amazon cloud battle is over a world without code; By Eric Rosenbaum; Published WED, APR 1 20209:27 AM EDT; Updated FRI, APR 3 202011:40 AM EDT
2. Gartner Identifies the Top Strategic Technology Trends for 2021; October 19, 2020
3. Gartner Identifies the Top Strategic Technology Tends for 2021; October 19, 2020
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Why 2021 will be the year of low-code; By Veronica Combs in Developer; October 30, 2020; 11.45 AM PST

SRICHARAN VADAPALLI
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Growing Demand for Businesses

"Data is the new form of currency"

Yes, you read right! It's the most valuable asset as oil and gold. Data plays an important role in any area of business organizations for strategic decision making. In the past decade, many companies haven't realized how important the data is for their business growth and treated data as an invaluable asset.

Let's take a closer look at how data helps you make better decisions both at the personal and organizational level. Enterprise data takes many forms such as customer data, product data, employee data, vendor levels etc.

For individuals, financial data includes monthly cash flows, expenditure, loans, education, insurance investments etc. Improper data collection on your existing employees, potential customers, products or investments could be devastating for both individuals and organizations. It is a common and well-known fact that business and individual finances relies upon the correct data and is the key driver of business success.

Today's largest and most successful organizations are relying more on data-driven decision-making for their business than ever before. In fact, there is much deeper thinking in the minds of CEO's on which product is more successful in the market, how much demand exists area-wise, which price is more competitive, and so on.

In real-time, data is generated through multiple sources either through internal collection of data, external sources or from social media platforms. Internal data is generated through internal operations and systems. For example, this can be adding a new customer details in the bank or transactions of customer through multiple channels like ATM, online web portal payments, mobile app, Point of sale purchases, and so on. External sources could be procuring gold exchange rates and foreign exchange rates from RBI or 3rd party sources. The best part about using social media data is it's widely used for marketing the products and also collecting customer feedback on products. Harnessing the data from all avenues and using it intelligently is the key for decision-making and business success.

The amount of data we produce every day is truly mind-boggling. There are 2.5 quintillion bytes of data created each day at our current pace, but that pace is only accelerating with the growth of the Internet of Things (IoT). Now that, over the last two years alone 90% of the world's data was generated. This is worth re-reading! While it's almost impossible to wrap your mind around these numbers, I gathered some of my favorite stats to help illustrate some of the ways we create these colossal amounts of data every single day.

Going a step further, a few companies even monetize data, for example, Nielsen, LexisNexis, Healthcare IQ, Owens & Minor, State Street Global Corporation, Ad Juggler, comScore and Verisk Analytics. These organizations purchase raw data from web analytics for online product sales including online search records for each brand, reprocess the data, format, and organize to sell it for premium. This will be an input for research analysts who provide competitor intelligence on data for organizations to position their products in the market.

Analysis on the changes of customer behavior and marketing has a huge impact on the data explosion. Let's see the factors fuelling the growth of data and business. Some key changing channels include:

Customer choice:

Customers today have multiple means of interacting with businesses; for example, a bank provides many channels such as mobile banking, card payments, on-premise banking, ATM withdrawals, online banking, and so on. The same is true for purchases; customers would shop from mobile apps, online and so on. So, these multiple channels contribute to increased data management, which organizations have to maintain for business enablement and operations.

Social Media:

Social media channels such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are flooding data. Social interaction sites go hand in hand between the individuals. In fact, many companies are relying on social media to promote their products. This data runs in terabytes/petabytes and is used by many organizations for data mining, contributing towards the huge data explosion.

Regulations:

Companies are required to maintain data for a stipulated time in proper formats, as required by regulatory bodies. For example, to combat money laundering, each organization dealing with financial money management and operations is required to provide clear customer records and credentials for a period of 10-15 years as demanded by regulatory authorities.

Digital world:

Most organizations are leaning towards paperless process to support their business by adding more digital data like e-books, ERP applications to automate many tasks etc. These innovations are fuelling data growth as well.

Increasingly, organizations should rely on platforms to accelerate their journey to becoming a data-driven. By leveraging next-generation technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud and data science, it is possible to drive business forward and make key decisions in real-time. Keeping this on the forefront, many enterprises should pay attention to implement advanced data models to provide predictive insights

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