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Cyber Security, AI/ML & Public Cloud Top Priorities for CIOs in India and Australia: Adobe Survey

New Delhi– July 2, 2020: While business operations across two-thirds of organisations in India and Australia have seen direct impact on customer activities during COVID-19, a survey of Chief Information Officers (CIOs) has found most remain optimistic about the future. Conducted in association with Advanis, the **CIO Perspectives Survey** captures how CIOs are helping their organisations be successful in the new world, by sharpening their focus on technology investments and workforce engagement.

Scott Rigby, Head of Digital Transformation, Adobe Asia Pacific said, "As we rapidly moved from functioning in an increasingly-digital world to one that is digital-only, CIOs have had to pivot their strategies to prioritise the online needs of their customers and employees. We've also seen digital-led customer experiences take centre stage for businesses of all sizes, thus becoming key to their continuity and success. While businesses with early investments in digital technology witnessed benefits, others looked at strengthening their digital foundation or building up robust digital strategies for their long-term success. As we look to the future, it will become imperative for companies to invest in Customer Experience Management (CXM) to help deliver exceptional experiences for the 'transformed consumer', as well as strengthen their employee ecosystem."

Response to COVID-19
98% of organisations across India have seen COVID-19 impact business functioning, with CIOs facing challenges in helping their teams to communicate effectively and having the right technology deployment to ensure smooth business continuity.

98% of the CIOs surveyed across the country claimed that their organisations are well equipped to work effectively even in a remote setting. Overall, long-term support to remote workforce (36%), security (35%) and cloud-based computing (31%) were identified as key challenges for organisations in India and Australia. In India, cloud computing (58%) and mobility (56%) were named as the primary challenges.

Additionally, while 97% of businesses in India and Australia initiated planning for when restrictions are eased, close to half of the organisations are still in the early stages of planning, with 63% of the respondents in India being optimistic about their organisation's ability to find success in the post COVID-19 economy and committing to a positive outlook.

Technological Interventions
Rigby said, "Business leaders need to find avenues where large-scale integration of technology can drive efficiency, and create a seamless customer and employee experience, eventually adding to business growth. Almost three-quarters of CIOs interviewed confirmed to already having invested in new technologies to solve for the challenges posed by COVID-19, with an overwhelming majority of 93% stating continued focus on automation to enhance efficiency in times to come."

When it comes to Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) adoption, 82% Indian organisations are already using these capabilities to implement to an existing project.

In terms of assessing the potential of emerging technology such as 5G, 67% of CIOs cited as this making a major impact to business operations in the next five years. One-fourth CIOs in India and Australia have listed data related issues as being the biggest challenge to implementation of AI in operations.

Cybersecurity

A staggering 89% of CIOs in India and Australia agreed to placing greater importance on cybersecurity issues. They also revealed that their organisations faced security related issues last year and re-asserted that cyber security continues to be one of the most cited areas for planned investment, both before COVID-19 and in the current situation. Some of the most prominent areas of cybersecurity related issues for Indian organisations were pertaining to insider threats (45%) and data breaches (38%), as compared to phishing for organisations in Australia (76%).

Workforce Reboot

Many organisations expect a negative impact on hiring due to COVID-19, although interestingly, 51% across India & Australia are actively and currently hiring within CIO's function, and plan to increase headcount across AI/ML/automation, cybersecurity & privacy, public cloud, infrastructure. When it comes to hiring new talent in IT operations, softer skill sets are coming to the forefront along with technical expertise. Skills such as teamwork (60%), project management (70%) and creativity (68%) are all almost as important a factor as analytical skills (51%) and customer knowledge (66%) when hiring talent in India.

Planned Investment

Overall, 50% CIOs expressed that their planned financial investments have decreased because of COVID-19, however, one-third of respondents in India reported that they have increased their investments. While cyber security (64%), AI/ML (45%), and public cloud (32%) continue to remain top priorities for a significant number of organisations across India and Australia, some areas including R&D (19%) and headcount (18%) have been deprioritised as compared to earlier.

"The current business landscape has brought forth the critical need for businesses to take steps towards digital transformation and ensure workplace efficiencies." said **Manish Patel, CIO at MG Motor India**.

"MG Motor has always adopted a digital-first, technology-enabled approach towards customer services. By leveraging technologies such as AI, ML etc., we've been able to better understand customer expectations, and tailor our customer experience strategy accordingly. We've also invested time in re-evaluating our priorities – nurturing our partner and dealer relations, and most importantly enabling work-life balance and upskilling our workforce. Moving forward, we believe the massive shift in customer buying behaviour will further encourage companies to prioritise their digital investments and set new standards for delivering experiences that go beyond the traditional approach and cut across customer journeys," he further added.

Conducted between April 24 and May 7, 2020 - the CIO Perspectives Survey captures insights from over 100 CIOs in India & Australia, in firms with atleast 100 employees. For more insights on how CIOs across India and Australia are leading operations and planning for the future, see the full report here.

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About Advanis
Advanis is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) and confirms that this research fully complies with all CRIC Standards including the CRIC Public Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements. This research was sponsored by Adobe and conducted by Advanis. For information about data collection, please contact Lori Reiser (lori_reiser@advanis.net 519.340.0125)

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