

The CIO Series

EMC's Sanjay Mirchandani Serves Up Ready-to-Go Business Intelligence





EMC's Sanjay Mirchandani Serves Up Ready-to-Go Business Intelligence

Sanjay Mirchandani, chief information officer at EMC Corp. has a straightforward plan for providing clients with the leading-edge information technology services: Prove the value of new concepts by first implementing them in-house. More generally, the company helps organizations to transform their operations and deliver IT-as-a-service. The company's cloud computing solutions, he says, aim to help businesses store, manage, protect and analyze their information in an agile, cost-efficient way. To achieve this, Mirchandani begins by engaging EMC employees and business units in order to assess their needs and preferences.



Sanjay Mirchandani, chief information officer (CIO) of EMC Corp., has a simple mantra to satisfy his end users: thoroughly assess their needs and then provide precisely the services that will meet them. His company is a global provider of information technology (IT) solutions that help clients to transform operations and then

deliver IT-as-a-service (ITaaS). His methodology is straightforward: Introduce leading-edge IT technologies internally at EMC that will demonstrate to clients a proven model.

With 55,000 employees across 400 sales offices in 85 countries, EMC provides a large, diverse test market for Mirchandani, who also is chief operating officer of the company's seven Global Centers of Excellence, located in the United States, China, India, Israel, Russia, Ireland and Egypt. The centers support EMC's worldwide research and development efforts, and provide customer support and shared services.

The 33-year-old, Hopkinton, Massachusetts-based EMC is a \$20 billion company ranked 152 on the Fortune 500. Its core services include helping companies to organize, archive and manage the content they generate; backing up and storing data on cloud platforms and on other storage facilities; and enabling customers to provide ITaaS.

Mirchandani's tools include new and emerging technologies in cloud platforms and big data (the large volumes of data that organizations increasingly leverage to support business goals.) Big data examples include the voluminous information generated by Internet traffic and mobile telephony; mobile commerce; social media; RFID (radio frequency identification tags) at retailers' warehouses; and medical records at large hospitals. EMC provides technologies to build a cloud foundation that can help better manage, analyze, and extract business intelligence and value from big data.

A Showcase of Capabilities

Mirchandani believes a top responsibility for the IT department in a technology company is to be



“our own first and best customer.” To accomplish that, EMC’s IT organization tests and uses the company’s technologies for its own business transformation, and then captures and shares the lessons learned and underlying best practices to help EMC customers enrich their own services.

Essentially, Mirchandani provides the first testimony for EMC as it pitches its services to clients to enhance data management. He visualizes EMC providing the technological expertise and the solutions spliced, diced and analyzed for clients to then use them in deciding how to reshape their strategies.

It helps that Mirchandani knows how business minds think and strategize. Unlike most CIOs, he didn’t come up the technology ranks – he played strictly business roles earlier in his career. Before joining EMC, he was Microsoft’s Asian regional vice president of enterprise services and held similar roles overseeing the company’s operations in the Asia Pacific region, South Asia and India. He has an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh and a bachelor’s degree from Drew University. “The only way I could understand what we were trying to do and deliver by way of value was to wear my business hat and keep the cool technological elements aside as an input,” he says.

“Truly transformational projects” is the buzz phrase that drives Mirchandani most of the time. On his plate within EMC, that centers in chiefly two areas. One is to continue developing the company’s cloud platforms to deliver all IT services to employees and partners, and elsewhere across the company. Second, he is busy with a complete overhaul of EMC’s next-generation business platforms to render a virtualized environment for its core businesses. That means accessing IT resources “virtually” from online cloud platforms without needing them to be physically available at a particular location.

Scanning those new frontiers, Mirchandani explains the challenge for his team. “How do we truly deliver IT-as-a service in a consumption model with everything highly automated, cataloged, well understood and fully transparent by way of costs? That will be the next big thing for IT!”

Demonstrating Savings and Efficiency

Mirchandani has clearly walked his talk. He is credited with helping EMC avoid “more than \$100 million in equipment, power, space and operational expenditures on its journey to the cloud,” according to a company note. EMC saved that money over six years as IT moved numerous processes to a “virtualized fabric” on a cloud platform. Much of the savings came from reductions in operational expenses, equipment and data center requirements, power and space needs, and also through cost avoidance. The team effort to extract more efficiency from internal operations continues. “You can never get enough of a good thing.”

The “paramount benefit” of all that work is to do things “for the business faster, repeatedly faster and markedly fast,” says Mirchandani. Next, he wants to render more IT and related functions as services to clients, with EMC as the sourcing partner. “We are looking at the cost of IT doing something more efficiently versus the business trying to do it themselves. For instance, if we create business intelligence and data science as services, and hand them to the business [client], the business could then focus on the analytics and the value it has. They don’t have to worry about the data itself, or managing or accessing it.”

Mirchandani offers a sampling of the questions he typically focuses on before an engagement: “What are we trying do? How are we trying to measure it? What are the businesses that would create success? What are the top three things that



will truly make a dramatic impact to the company's bottom line or operating costs? Then, we figure out the smartest way to do it."

Overcoming Challenges, Ensuring Buy-in

Mirchandani does face challenges and resistance as he goes about changing the ways EMC uses IT. He strives to strike "a careful balance" between the complexities that develop as an organization gets bigger, and finding ways to make processes simpler and more efficient.

It is not always a straight-line exercise. "A couple of areas where, in an IT organization, you could have friction is when you start looking at things that were controlled by a business unit by way of expenditure or decisions, but which may make a difference to more than one group within the company," he says. "Therefore you have to look those decisions more as a platform."

An example of this is how different business units interact, and provide information or support for the same customer, Mirchandani explains. "At the end of the day, you don't want fragmented systems with different people looking at things through different lenses. It is important to view such activities as building a corporate asset. As you get bigger or more sophisticated, you have to step back and ask – what is important to the company and for the enterprise? And that can be frictional."

Resolving differences is best done by getting people to the table "to understand the bigger picture and to find the right governance model," says Mirchandani. It is also helpful to measure the impact of IT expenditures, such as how it adds value to the business and how it provides a competitive edge. That keeps out activities that do not add value, he explains.

Collaborative exercises often secure the required support, but are not a silver bullet. "In some cases

you have to be ruthless about decisions," says Mirchandani. Examples include his determination to go ahead with virtualization, cloud technology and other changes in EMC's technology architecture. "We were ruthless on staying the course. There were no U-turns. In other cases, you have to make the business case, and show them the value and the return on investment to help them understand that the way they've done things before is not the way to do them in the future."

Mirchandani offers an example of one situation where he had to stand his ground. EMC recently replaced a large line of business applications with a technology platform that was "non-modified and non-customized." IT relied on industry best-practices to guide its decision in that change. The idea in using standardized technology was to take advantage of the innovation occurring in that area that may not be available with a customized platform. But it was easier said than done. "You have to get people on board because complexity is institutionalized over time and people have to understand why the change is good."

Learning and Mentoring

Mirchandani has had mentors in his career. Early on, he recalls one telling him not be afraid to ask questions, and to do so respectfully. "It is not about being belligerent or in-your-face," he says. "If you have a question in your mind, you can be sure somebody else also has that question." Also, asking questions helps one to understand the small steps in a process and to develop an eye for detail. These days, as he scouts for talent, he looks for people with passion. "I have all the time in the world for people who have a sparkle in their eye when telling me about the next cool thing or the difference they want to make."



This article was produced by Knowledge@Wharton, the online business journal of The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. The project was sponsored by Wipro Technologies.

www.wipro.com <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu>

The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania — founded in 1881 as the first collegiate business school — is recognized globally for intellectual leadership and ongoing innovation across every major discipline of business education. The most comprehensive source of business knowledge in the world, Wharton bridges research and practice through its broad engagement with the global business community. The School has 5,000 undergraduate, MBA, executive MBA, and doctoral students; more than 9,000 annual participants in executive education programs; and an alumni network of 88,000 graduates.

ABOUT KNOWLEDGE@WHARTON

Knowledge@Wharton is the online business analysis journal of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. The site, which is free, captures relevant knowledge generated at Wharton and beyond by offering articles and videos based on research, conferences, speakers, books and interviews with faculty and other experts on current business topics. The Knowledge@Wharton network — including Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Indian, Arabic, Israeli and High School editions — has more than 2.1 million subscribers worldwide.

For more information: <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu>

ABOUT WIPRO TECHNOLOGIES

Wipro Technologies, the global IT business of Wipro Limited (NYSE:WIT) is a leading Information Technology, Consulting and Outsourcing company that delivers solutions to enable its clients do business better. Wipro Technologies delivers winning business outcomes through its deep industry experience and a 360 degree view of “Business through Technology” — helping clients create successful and adaptive businesses. A company recognized globally for its comprehensive portfolio of services, a practitioner’s approach to delivering innovation and an organization wide commitment to sustainability, Wipro Technologies has 135,000 employees and clients across 54 countries.