

## CNBCTV18, India: A Look at How Francisco D'Souza did IT



"I've spent half my life here and had the privilege of serving as CEO for the past 12 years," said **Francisco D'Souza**, Cognizant Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

Excerpts from *CNBCTV18's* article:

"There are many things that could strike you about Francisco D'Souza, 50, who in April will conclude a twelve-and-a-half-year tenure as chief executive officer (CEO) of Cognizant Technology Solutions.

But at first sight in 2006, D'Souza evoked the visage of boy wonder Robin without the superhero mask. He was 37 years old, when Lakshmi Narayanan passed on the CEO reins to him. And who were D'Souza's CEO contemporaries in Indian information technology (IT) at the time? Subramaniam Ramadorai, 60, at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). Nandan Nilekani, 51, at Infosys.



The most conspicuous market change that D'Souza's Cognizant demonstrated was overtaking Wipro (in 2011-12) and Infosys (2014-15), each of which had breached the billion-dollar mark before it.

Between 2008 and 2016, Cognizant built a consulting practice to enhance its prowess to win large transformational deals. He took that story to investors in 2010, continuing to justify the lower operating margins expectation.

By 2014, D'Souza was personally spending time on Cognizant's Emerging Business Accelerator that was honing its mindset for the digitalised IT industry, where deals sizes would come down as enterprises wanted more bang for the technology buck. Cognizant had to target the innovation budgets of an enterprise.

Now, in the Indian peer group, Cognizant is second to only TCS. On the Wednesday earnings call, D'Souza made the ultimate admission. 'I don't think we are dependent on winning large transformational deals. The business is built on this idea of continuing to grow with our clients in a methodical way. That usually involves many, many small and medium-sized projects with each client to continue to grow.' That is the technology-led consulting approach, D'Souza had promised investors, but with a remarkable difference. While he had built out consulting, he has also overseen it being subsumed by technology."

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