

The Hindu BusinessLine, India: Cognizant CEO Brian Humphries Says We Need to Get Back to Being the Bellwether



“Brian Humphries took over as the CEO Of Cognizant when the IT services’ company was going through a crisis. Six months after taking over the post, Humphries is confident that the company will return to being a bellwether in the near future. In an interview with BusinessLine, he said he is putting several strategies in place to drive growth.

Excerpts from the interview:

Cognizant has revised its overall revenue guidance twice this year. So, how do you plan to make the company more robust?

We have not hit our stride in recent years and we need to get back to being the bellwether. I have inherited a fantastic company from Frank (former CEO and vice-chairman, Francisco D’Souza). We need to restart the engine but we can’t turn it on overnight. It takes six quarters to do that and we have to hire more people. I have just approved the hiring of 500 salespeople to get them in front of customers to build relationships eventually leading to pipeline and to total contract value which eventually shows up in revenue.



On the other hand, I have been blown away by the customer loyalty to Cognizant. I have told colleagues that you are putting me in front of happy customers every time. But the fact is that customers are extremely happy with us and especially those who have been working with us for the past five, 10 years. There is this winning spirit among employees here and that spirit is not something you can create overnight. It is on the back of 25 years of success.

So, how do you plan to correct that?

It is just that we do not have enough of our mix that is digital. I am one of those general managers who believe that if something is not perfect, it is actually exciting for me because if you can fix it then amazing things can happen. I mean it is the classic dilemma that there is a portion of the market that is growing in double digits (11-12 per cent) and there is a portion of the market that is flat to declining to 1 or 2 per cent. The portion of our mix that is in the high growth is about a third of Cognizant. As that portion becomes 50-60 per cent in the years ahead, our overall growth rate will expand as well. I am putting several measures to make that happen as quickly as possible. Simultaneously, I have identified four key battlegrounds in digital that we need to be successful in — cloud, data, digital engineering and IoT. I am firm of the opinion that 5G technology will unlock the power of the Internet of Things.

What are the clients telling you?

Our customers would like to see us have a stronger point of view around certain industry trends, which is one of the reasons I am building a more industry vertical experience because I need to be able to speak to them in their jargon, in their nomenclature, their lexicon. I need to understand the regulatory environment in their world, the undercurrents and their pain points. This allows me to bring solutions to any given industry from a different industry.”

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