

A Journey from Information to Insights and Impact

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Recognized in Gartner's Market Guide for Data and Analytics Service Providers 2018, BRIDGEi2i is a global Analytics solutions company offering services in Marketing Analytics, Sales Analytics, Risk Management, Supply Chain Analytics, Employee Engagement Analytics and Customer Analytics. Apart from India, it has presence in the United States and works for a wide array of sectors including Technology, Financial Services, Insurance, Retail, Consumer Packaged Goods, Education and Hospitality. With a motto to transform Information to Insight to Impact, BRIDGEi2i endeavours to create a sustainable business impact by leveraging data-science through advanced analytics.

IMI Konnect: *How would you rank Indian Analytics Industry in comparison to its global peers? What are its major advantages and disadvantages?*

PR: The Indian Analytics industry has gone from strength to strength over the last two decades majorly due to a lot of global Analytics work getting done from here. Also, in the recent years, as Indian companies are becoming more digital, more and more data being generated, the growth of Analytics industry has been accelerated with applications in Indian market also.

The main advantage of this development is that India has become a major hub of Analytics globally. And the downside could be – the data science knowledge is very broad as against the deep knowledge that matured markets like the US has developed. However, this could also be

considered as an opportunity, in some ways.

IMI Konnect: *With a number of competitors in Analytics space, what kind of challenges does a start-up in this area face?*

PR: The competition comes from multiple directions – consulting companies, IT, BPO are also getting into Analytics along with many pure-play Analytics companies, as the entry barriers are low. The challenge lies in scaling up the start-up, as scaling not only requires capabilities but also structured thinking on how to sell globally, how to differentiate from other companies, how to drive innovation and how to marry technology with business context etc. Creating awareness to work with big enterprises and be in their consideration set, to be able to partner with them is another major challenge.

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IMI Konnect: *What motivated you to start a company in Analytics?*

PR: Having spent more than a decade in Analytics industry with HP and GE with intrapreneurial roles of building Analytics organizations, it was a natural conclusion to continue in this space. Also, as the industry was gaining momentum, I wanted to build an organization that can partner with many enterprises in their journey from Information to Insights to Impact, leveraging my experience of working on the diverse business models in my earlier roles.

I strongly believe that analytics will not only drive business transformation but also solve social problems, enabling people to live better lives. With that thought I helped launch the community of Humans of Analytics as an initiative to celebrate the people who make this industry what it is today.

IMI Konnect: *How enthusiastic are Indian companies in using big data and Analytics for business decisions?*

PR: A large part of our clientele are large enterprises like Fortune 500 companies, globally, and our focus industries are financial services, insurance, consumer goods and technology. Until two years back we hadn't focused on India as a market, but, we have seen a sea change over the last two years, especially large financial institutions and large conglomerates. They have realized they are sitting with a humongous amount of data which could act as a competitive advantage as well as a better lever to drive more

business through enhanced customer experience and operational effectiveness and hence the market is just building up.

IMI Konnect: *Are the Indian companies using marketing Analytics, sales Analytics, and customer Analytics solutions?*

PR: Yes, they are. A lot of marketing Analytics is applied to ensure acquisition of the right customers and to take the right product to the right customer. On sales, enabling sales organizations to offer the right product based on the need of the customer is a major use case. The ultimate aim is improving customer experience, operational effectiveness and developing new digital business models. Banks, insurance, telecom and retail companies majorly focus on these areas.

IMI Konnect: *How keen are Indian companies to use supply chain Analytics and HR Analytics solutions?*

PR: Manufacturing companies are implementing supply chain Analytics in areas such as demand planning, inventory optimization, procurement planning, predictive maintenance, etc. HR Analytics adoption in India is low compared to global companies. Currently, the use cases are restricted to conducting employee surveys and analyzing employee engagement and satisfaction. Recruitment and employee engagement are the areas where there is more interest, and it is picking up.

IMI Konnect: *Which are the kind of solutions or*

tools (like forecasting) that Indian companies ask for from a firm like Bridgei2i?

PR: Companies are looking for solutions that can enable humans to drive better decisions or automated Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions for their digital enterprise. BRIDGEi2i uses machine learning techniques to learn from structured and unstructured data to enable AI actions like:

a) Proactive Alerting, b) Personalized interventions & enablement, c) Dynamic planning & optimization, d) Automated interactions with the user using chatbot, voice, game etc.

The AI actions are then contextualized to a domain like sales, marketing, customer support, supply chain, risk management, pricing etc. offered as a smart application for Indian businesses.

IMI Konnect: *What role is Analytics playing in sectors like education, insurance and hospitality?*

PR: Insurance is much more matured in Analytics adoption compared to hospitality and education. In insurance, areas such as customer experience and sales effectiveness are becoming key focus areas. The sales agent of insurance companies is armored with Analytics to drive more sales based on the behaviour of the customers, and also there is an increase in online buying and Analytics is being embedded at the point of sales and service as well.

Hospitality on the other hand has focused majorly on customer experience management and revenue management whereas

recommendation of appropriate course/ interventions to the right student may be the key use case for the education industry.

IMI Konnect: *Recently Hyderabad and Bangalore are becoming hubs for start-ups. What proportions of them are sustainable in next 15-20 years, given the challenges and policies in place?*

PR: Bangalore and Hyderabad are the biggest hubs owing to the IT ecosystem that the Analytics industry can leverage. Those states/cities which create the infrastructure conducive for the industry will eventually win. Having said that, cities like Pune and Kolkata have a lot of potential for becoming such hubs, especially for Analytics industry.

IMI Konnect: *In next 5-10 years, what sectors, according to you, will be the biggest bets for an analytics start-up?*

PR: Industries which are becoming digital and generating a lot of data such as Financial Institutions, E-commerce, Healthcare, and Manufacturing are the industries with huge potential. Also, the government is sitting on a gold mine of data and used cases through its digital initiatives, and it is one of the potential sectors that Analytics start-ups can bet on.

IMI Konnect: *What are the global trends in Analytics with respect to start-ups? Is Indian scenario any different from them?*

PR: Focused business applications leveraging data and Analytics with a technology layer is a trend that is working globally. India has been primarily a services story in Analytics. Given the

huge talent availability, a combination of services and technology applications will work well for the Indian players. It is less of an outsourcing and more of a technology and consulting play that Indian companies will have to focus on. India has the ability to create AI applications that global companies need, and cater to a big portion of the market in coming years.

IMI Konnect: *Do you feel that the Analytics industry is going to face a dearth of skilled manpower in the near future?*

PR: The answer could be yes as well as no. There will not be a dearth of talent as there is an abundance of raw talent available in the areas such as engineering, mathematics, statistics, etc. At the same time, emphasis and focus is required on Analytics as a subject of curriculum to build domain knowledge and expertise.

IMI Konnect: *What are the major constraints faced by you as an entrepreneur?*

PR: Building a global brand of consideration is never an easy task – there are constraints and it takes time. But it has been a fun journey so far.

IMI Konnect: *Do you think policy makers should be more focused to provide a better business environment for this industry?*

PR: More articulated black and white policies around 'usage of data,' will be helpful as data security and privacy is still left to interpretation in many scenarios. Government and public data-digital initiatives could be more start-up friendly.