

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN DIAGNOSTICS

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Metropolis Healthcare is one of India's leading diagnostics company offering a wide range of clinical laboratory tests and profiles, which are used for prediction, early detection, diagnostic screening, confirmation and/or monitoring of the disease.



1. What has been the role of technology in the diagnostics industry? How has it evolved in the last five years with the influx of new technologies like cloud, big data, analytics, and many others?

The diagnostics industry has been slow in adopting technologies. Investments in new technical know-how have been limited to the large companies comprising the organised sector, which accounts for just about 20 percent of the industry. The role of technology was limited to machines that were used for analysing and interpreting samples of various tests. However, in the last 5-10 years, there has been a visible shift. Today, medical diagnostics providers want to be seen as tech firms, not just brick-and-mortar entities. The transition aims at not only improving the operational efficiency of the labs, but also focused on bringing customer-centricity to patient care. IoT (internet of things) and big data analytics are playing a critical role in driving some of the technology breakthroughs. For example, certain information technology systems allow companies to fully integrate and automate processes ranging from registration, barcoding and billing of specimens to analysis and reporting of test results. The supervisor of the department closely monitors the results and, wherever needed, orders re-check.



Businesses are increasingly moving on the cloud to modernise their information management systems, as well as using big data and analytics to forecast diseases/illnesses trends and provide consumers with in-depth insights on the possible triggers. Also, businesses are harnessing the pervasiveness of mobile devices and the internet to enrich the customer experience. Patients can access their test results online without the need to travel to the clinic to collect reports. Digital media is presenting exciting opportunities for companies to amplify their marketing efforts by launching consumer campaigns, as well as gauge customer feedback on social media channels.

2. To what magnitude has the industry focused on achieving digital transformation?

Digital transformation is not yet a priority for many organisations as they lack the understanding of digitalisation and its benefits it unlocks to their business. However, a few larger companies are investing in re-building the IT blueprint of the entire organisation to improve operations, increase employee productivity, and engagement with the customer. They are investing in setting-up CRM software, toll-free contacts, call centres, big data platform, analytics and so on to take their customer service a notch-up.

The diagnostics industry is continuously innovating processes to keep pace with the fast-evolving digital world and go the extra mile to raise customer experience

3. How is this changing the ecosystem and customer experience?

Customers and service providers have moved to occupy centre stage of nearly every industry's ecosystem, driven by smart mobility and 'always-on' connectivity. For the diagnostics industry, it means providing efficient and cost-effective services that are nimble enough to meet the evolving needs of their target audience.

Like the banking sector, the diagnostics industry is continuously innovating processes to keep pace with the fast-evolving digital world and go the extra mile to raise



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customer experience. In the future, we will witness the adoption of centralised information systems that assist in streamlining patient appointments or scheduling reports, as well as the deployment of systems that support new payments channels like UPI, e-wallets, and so on. Also, customers in the B2B (business-to-business) segment will have access to evolved tracking mechanisms for tracking the movement of the reports.

4. What barriers do organisations face, while embarking on digital transformation?

Technology changes alone do not define the success of a digital transformation program. It is a highly people-led initiative. While the CXOs are warming up to the idea of investing in digital transformation programs, the challenge is mostly around bringing a change in the mindset of the middle management who believe that technology will make their skills redundant. Also, the other stakeholders in the ecosystem, for example, doctors are comfortable using paper-based prescriptions rather than mobile screens. It is imperative for companies to ensure that the workforce is not only conditioned to accept change, but is also equipped to navigate it. 