

# LEADING THE NEXT WAVE OF DISRUPTION

New technology continues to transform how businesses go to market. **Amit Kapur**, Head of UK & Ireland at TCS, talks to Criticaleye's **Claudia Fairweather** about the key areas Boards need to focus on when it comes to digital disruption

It's the dawn of a new era in terms of digitalisation. It's up to Boards to ensure that the CEO and senior leadership team have the right support to act quickly to keep pace with shifts in data and technology. At the same time, Chairs and non-executive directors also need to possess the knowledge to ask the right questions around both the risks and opportunities.

At our recent virtual [Non-Executive Director Forum](#), a central point of discussion was around the digital awareness of the Board and the problems that can occur when there are blind spots. In a poll conducted during the event, 51% of attendees said that they thought the Boards they sat on lacked the right skills and knowledge to navigate digitalisation.

It's a gap that Chairs and NEDs will need to address. **Amit Kapur**, Head of UK & Ireland, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), provided insight during the NED Forum into what Board-level directors must look out for in a fast-changing business landscape, sharing his thoughts specifically on how executive and non-executive directors can align technology and data with both customer and employee needs over the short, medium and long-term. >



### How do you see digitalisation changing the business landscape?

The main transition points I see at present relate to the supply chain, energy, talent and digital. When you look at them, they're not happening in isolation, they're intertwined. The digital transition has been underway for some time, so we cannot say this is a new phenomenon, but it has sped-up significantly and is much more active than we have seen before.

### What impact is this having on business models?

For a long time, technology was seen as a support function. It slowly progressed into an enabling function and that in itself was a big achievement. We are now seeing the emergence of technology-led businesses and that is a huge transition as it is driving business model disruption. There is a fundamental change in how businesses engage with not only their customers, but employees.

### What does this shift mean for skills and talent?

The availability of skills to deliver products and services in new ways is variable, depending very much on geography. A lot of work needs to be done on managing the transition of skills and talent to operate in disruptive business models. Boards must be on their toes to look for a deeper view on these transitions, such as responding to what we have seen with the great resignation. At the same time, we need to keep an eye on increasing costs and financial pressures, factoring in what is happening on the macroeconomic front and adapting to what this means for skills, talent and productivity.

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### How should Boards be looking at investing in new technology?

Boards need to actively look at how funds are allocated across an organisation. What needs to be invested now to drive the scale and efficiency of the business? What funds are required to innovate towards a newer business model? And where and how funds should be allocated to disrupt the business model? These questions can drive businesses forward and I think the Board can give a good steer to the executives, challenging and supporting them, in thinking about both the business of today and tomorrow.

### What role does the Board play in digitalisation?

The composition of the Board needs to include individuals who bring digital expertise to the table. There will also be those who need digital upskilling. I think the pace has picked up in the last two years, especially on the back of the pandemic, for people to recognise the relevance of tech.

However, Boards need to be aware that culture also matters hugely. This is very much about creating the right organisational structure and operating model, linking that with the overall purpose of the business. Those elements must be brought together and the Board has a key role to play in making that happen.

### Do you envisage digitalisation accelerating sustainability targets?

Technology is essential in realising sustainability goals. We can clearly see some of the targets companies are setting, such as around Net Zero, but at the same time, the digital transition is also playing an important role in creating more sustainable organisations by driving innovation or better quality data and analytics. Digital will be crucial, whether that's in measuring commitments like ESG targets, or down to the brass tacks of energy consumption. ■

#### Featuring Commentary From:



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Amit oversees the strategy and operations for TCS' second-largest region, which services large, global and leading UK organisations. Since joining in 1999, he has helped some of the top 500 global firms, in consulting, advisory and management roles, to become more efficient and improve their business results.

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