

Podcast Episode 20: Building blocks of an enterprise strategy with Deepak Bharadwaj, Vice-President and General Manager, ServiceNow

TJ: Hi, I'm TJ.

In this episode, our focus will be on the various building blocks of an enterprise strategy to become adaptive and resilient. Our guest is Deepak Bharadwaj. Deepak is the Vice-President and General Manager at ServiceNow, where he is currently focused on growing and scaling new product lines, legal service delivery, workplace service delivery, and the safe workplace within ServiceNow's employee workflows product portfolio.

At ServiceNow, he was previously responsible for leading the company's foray into the HR technology space and built a market-defining HR service delivery product line. Now used by hundreds of highly satisfied organizations to deliver great employee experiences. Prior to ServiceNow, Deepak was VP of Product Management for Oracle's talent acquisition and talent management solutions.

Welcome, Deepak!

With several months into this global pandemic, a lot of things have changed overnight for businesses across the globe, and it continues to evolve at a rapid pace. From a digital workplace perspective, what has changed in these months and what can organizations expect going forward?

Deepak: Great. Let's talk about remote working as an example. So, with a global pandemic, many businesses have had to embrace remote working as business as usual. Companies have had to quickly spin up new digital workplaces where, remote employees both have the right tools to communicate and collaborate, but also feel supported in order to maintain productivity.

So, when you think about virtual meetings and events, as an example, in-person events and meetings that were once the norm and virtual meetings were the exceptions in the past, but now COVID-19 has really flipped those scenarios. And the pandemic has really influenced the emergence of, what we would call the distance economy.

Right? So, our businesses and activities that don't rely on face-to-face interactions and made those a lot more prominent. So, organizations with operating models that depend on first-party or hosted events have also switched quickly to virtual alternatives, which is very fascinating. And we started looking at the trends and this is as of September 2020, just from The Global Newswire, what we've also seen is 86% of global companies now believe that digital workplace will co-exist with the physical workspace post-COVID-19 and 78% actually expect to increase remote working. And that's very significant going forward.

TJ: Absolutely. I think it has set up the context for the rest of the conversation. Now, some companies are bringing their employees back to the workplace and this needs to

be done methodically and with careful planning, which is undoubtedly challenging, IT leaders must respond quickly to the seismic changes to the work environment by optimizing processes and workflows. And adopting new digital capabilities to ensure that the workplace is safe and secure. While also keeping up with the employee experience. What are your views about this responsible reopening?

Deepak: There are a few different dimensions that, that come to mind. First and foremost, employees deserve a safe and productive work environment, and this has to be an environment that reduces the risk of infection significantly and helps stop the spread.

Now employers, some more than others based on geo, they continue to struggle with the pandemic. And they're still trying to figure out how to get employees back into the workplace safely. In what's becoming clear to most organizations is that this process will take a lot longer than desired or expected, and this is going to take careful planning and execution.

And so the need for business functions from IT to HR, to the workplace, to legal, all of them will work together seamlessly and have the right digital technology investments has never been more important. And flexibility in operations is really the key to continuity and safety. So staggered work patterns, employee choice, scaling openings up or down all of these, gain additional importance as employers start to, uh, get into this reopening phase of their workplaces.

TJ: You must have been working very closely with customers across the globe, creating a strategy to build a resilient and responsive digital workplace. And ServiceNow is one of the most evolving and comprehensive platforms with a unified dashboard capability. How does ServiceNow enable companies to adapt to the changing dynamics in the workplace?

Deepak: So, at ServiceNow, we view the employee holistically and we are going to create great employee experiences whenever and wherever they need it. And we're going to hide the complexity of the organization from that employee. So, they don't need to know whether they are interacting with IT, with HR, with workplace services or legal. They just want to have a singular place to go get help and guidance. And in this case, they want to be guided through that return to the workplace process.

Now on the flip side, the support teams of the organizations, the people that are in the HR department, in IT and workplace services, et cetera. They need to be empowered to be able to do their day-to-day work in support of the employee persona. So, Workplace Services, for example, needs to be able to manage employee shifts and schedules and HR needs to be able to assess the readiness of their employees to return. And so ServiceNow technology really addresses both sides of those coins. Powered by the Now Platform, the Safe Workplace Suite is designed to help companies manage the essential steps for returning employees to the workplace, assessing both their workforce and workplace readiness to support everyone's health and safety.

Now, the apps in the suite, they replaced ad hoc and unstructured emails, spreadsheets, and paper with fast, predictable workflows that work easily with

distributed teams. So not only are the interactions more reliable and efficient, but the Now platform provides dashboarding and reporting to help managers and team members, oversee events and statuses easily.

TJ: Moving towards business continuity plans and physical workspaces. Do you agree that an overhaul and IoTization focused transformation is the answer? What are some of the steps that companies need to take towards this journey?

Deepak: Great question. So, at ServiceNow, we believe in digital workflows and our purpose really is to make work, work better for people. So, whether it's a natural disaster or a public health outbreak, like COVID-19, ServiceNow really enables existing systems across an organization to work better together.

Earlier this year, we launched four emergency response apps and these were really to help organizations mobilize their emergency response efforts by streamlining and automating activities on multiple fronts to drive business continuity. And now more recently, our investments in the Safe Workplace suite enable organizations to plan and execute on their business continuity plans.

Because of the extensibility of the Now platform and low and no-code development tools, we really anticipate our customers, as well as our partners, such as HCL, will build on the starting points to create more integrated and extensive workflows. And one of the areas where we see tremendous opportunity is to extend our solutions with IoT enabled infrastructure and data.

So, this would be everything from temperature scanning to proximity detection for contact tracing, to measuring real estate utilization for space optimization purposes, to leveraging smart building technology, to adjusting the working environment. So that means lighting, temperature, et cetera, based on personal preferences.

And my belief is that the time is right for companies now to start executing their IoT strategies for the workplace, not just for business continuity, but also for great employee experiences.

TJ: Lastly, HCL Technologies and ServiceNow have developed a joint proposition called SafeSense, a specific solution, enabling enterprises to reopen the workplace and adapt to today's environment. How does the partnership between HCL and ServiceNow help enterprises resolve the workplace challenges, driving operational efficiency and making employee experiences seamless?

Deepak: Yeah, I'm very excited about this partnership. And this partnership really brings the strength of HCL's tested, SafeSense IoT solutions to ServiceNow customers in specifically those looking for thermal scanning and smart badge integrations. Now thermal scanning is a very important capability for customers and that's an excellent complement to our health screening solution. So, with SafeSense and ServiceNow employees can get a touchless temperature check and that temperature data is instantly fed into ServiceNow to ensure that healthy employees are rendered access to the office and potentially ill employees are guided through the correct processes like quarantine or testing. Similarly, SafeSense's Smart ID badging is a great addition to

our contact tracing app. And so, using HCL's smart ID badging, companies can pull proximity data into a contact tracing case to identify employees who may have come into contact with an individual that was infected. Another great thing is that these integrations are seamless to the user, but they add incredible functionality and value to the client.

So, we sincerely hope that our joint customers are able to leverage these solutions as they bring their employees back into the workplace safely.

TJ: Absolutely. Thank you very much, Deepak. It was wonderful talking to you for the great conversation. As the current situation evolves, we hope to get to talk to you soon again.

Deepak: Thanks again for having me and looking forward to more such conversations. Please stay safe, everyone.

TJ: I thank our listeners for joining in. We want to hear from you. We need your feedback and suggestions for future topics. The contact information is available in the description. Comment, share, recommend and subscribe.

See you all in the next one.