The HCLTech Trends and Insights podcast

Nick Ismail

So Vijay, we're here in London conducting this podcast and this year has been quite a big year for you, both personally and professionally. It's seen you move from the President of Engineering and R&D services at HCLTech to becoming the CTO. How have you found the transition so far?

Vijay Guntur

You know, Nick, I've been in the company long now and I've done several roles. The role in the as the head of engineering was to make sure our business grows. We're competitive, we invest in areas that are needed for the future. We followed the digital engineering strategy. It was reasonably successful for us and we created reasonable impact. Built new capabilities, whether it's around softwareization, digital engineering, broadly data around 5G and we made some progress with the semiconductor side as well. So we set ourselves in the direction of travel which will stand in good stead for the future in our engineering business, but as was, to focus on needs of a particular segment or a particular customer profile in our customer base. However, with one HCLTech, our customer profile and customer base that we can address is much more richer. It's much more varied and broader. It's beyond the CTO needs we are able to now service the CIO needs, the CMO needs, the manufacturing heads needs and more important with AI now the business leaders, needs are being prominent, and they are spending and we are able to then address that market. So I'm really excited to be able to build solutions, build technology capability and competence to serve our broader customer base and we're able to see now patterns between different customer needs. You buy vertical buy, horizontals and then build solutions. So this, this role as the head of technology, providing direction, providing investments for the company, is to be able to address holistically our customer needs. And I think we can really live the one HCLTech promise and deliver to it. Because I think we are able to now not only the front of the cycle, be able to of the of the sales cycle, be able to get to understand what customer needs are, but then also able to stitch solutions that are much more broader, richer, much more future looking innovation led if I can say, to be able to address customer needs. So I think it's very exciting. It is also challenging in terms of being able to prioritize well and invest correctly for what we think will be the future demand and where the future needs will be, of course, we do what is required for today's needs, which is investments that we already made in the past to serve and to be able to take the solutions to market. But I think in this role, we need to be thinking at least, if not anything, a year to two ahead of time and invest well in advance and be prepared for the opportunity that is going to be there.

Nick Ismail

Sure, especially with the rapidly changing nature of technology.

Vijay Guntur

Yes, it is.

Nick Ismail

When you have moved into this role, are there any new skills that you've had to adopt and have you brought any skills from your previous role into this new one?

Vijay Guntur

I think the skills that are transferable are the technology skills, the people skills, the ability to manage executive expectations. I think those are all the transferable skills into the new role. However, the new role also demands change management and ability to collaborate, be able to take teams along, diverse, diverse teams across the business, where you have to influence more. You have very little control, I would say, if I can use the word, but you have to influence and then you have to kind of motivate the teams to focus on the bigger picture and build skills, capabilities, solutions that are required to address future needs. So I think that broadly is what I think has happened to the skill set and the base that I had to what today have more important is I've worked across the company in course over time, so I have had the opportunity to build the relationships and know people well, I think that's you can think about it as transferable skill, but I think it's more than a skill. It is about the relationships across the organization that we've had, which are coming very handy to be able to galvanize people in a direction and move us forward.

Nick Ismail

And you have been at the company 35 years, right? Yes, yeah. So you know, as well as anyone. Talking about that forward looking nature of the CTO role and technology, it's clear that innovations tech is constantly evolving, which means that the CTO role is rapidly changing. So how do you plan for that, or ensure you're ready to constantly adapt?

Vijay Guntur

I think, in this role as a CTO, one is to build on the future technology direction, whether it is AI generative AI tomorrow, you know, something around computing, quantum computing, some changes around different ways people will interact with devices in the future and so on and so forth. That's one aspect. But also, I think in this role, the unusual part of the CTO role that's here is that we have to be able to build the ecosystems that will help to deliver on the promise of the innovation and the technology, so that, I think is unique, that we have the ability to build those relationships with our partners and to work along with them to be able to make this change real, whether you think about what we are focused on, data and AI transformation, that customers will go through the business value, value stream innovation that we are focused on, or something like service transformation that we are thinking about with AI, which will disrupt and create efficiencies for the future. I think all of those capabilities, we have a very big role for the partners to play in the tech the partners are driving, whether it's the hyperscalers, the tech OEMs, the semiconductor chip companies, these are the partnerships that we are already having, and we are deepening our relationships there, but also we are building new ones around data and AI and things that will be needed for the future for our business. So I think being able to synergize where the technology and innovation will create value, it's important for us to work and leverage the ecosystems that we are already having and bring them together to deliver that benefit. I think that's what makes this role much more richer and much more impactful.

Nick Ismail

Sure it's it's very important, obviously, to embrace, utilize, champion the ecosystem. On a more personal level, you've moved out to Santa Clara, where we've just opened our latest Customer Experience Center, or CEC. How have you found the move to the US and how important is this new CEC for HCLTech moving forward.

Vijay Guntur

You know, personally, the move to the Bay Area is something that I've always wanted to do. Just before COVID I was to move and things changed, so I could not make the move then, but I'm really happy that I could make the move now and it's been a very enriching experience, just the vibe and the energy in the various different be able to, you know, get back into that place where there is so much happening with technology innovation and also business impact at the same time. I think that's a very, I am fortunate and, you know, grateful that something like that has really happened, and very excited about it. Now thinking about so that's on the personal front the question you asked in terms of our CECs, our CECs and labs are something we are investing in. We already have our CEC in Noida. We're going to build one in New Jersey. It's under build. We'll be doing the same with Santa Clara in a few months from now. I think this will help our customers and partners to engage with us much more easily and much more frequently, which will ensure that we are aligned and we can generate business outcomes and use technology as a way to achieve those business outcomes. As we say, we bring the best of our people and technology together to supercharge progress for our customers, right? I think it's super critical for us to bring the innovation, the technology and the people together.

Nick Ismail

Amazing. Vijay, thank you. Bye.