

► TBR EVENT PERSPECTIVE



FAMILY AND FRIENDS: PwC MAKES ANALYST DAY IN INDIA ALL ABOUT THE CLIENTS AND THEIR STORIES

Author: Patrick Heffernan (patrick.heffernan@tbri.com),
Principal Analyst

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► 8 CLIENTS WITH 8 STORIES AND PLENTY OF COMMON THEMES

Setting the tone for the day, India Advisory Leader Deepankar Sanwalka explained that the event would be about discussion and about clients and the work PwC is doing with them, with four successive breakout sessions in the morning and four more in the afternoon. The clients — almost all India-based companies or government agencies — spanned the industry spectrum from pharmaceutical to software to manufacturing to municipal authorities. In addition to the common themes that emerged across the day, described below, TBR noted that every client had prepared for the standard analyst question, “Why did you choose PwC?” Notably, half of the clients used a competitive process to select PwC as a vendor, a high percentage in TBR’s experience. Clients said they worked with PwC because the firm:

- Shared the client’s cultural value for trust and commitment to strict adherence to compliance, even across global operations

LET THE CLIENTS DO THE TALKING

Gurgaon, India; Sept. 11-12, 2019

With an atmosphere designed for relaxing and sharing stories, PwC’s Analyst Day in India captured the firm’s current position as a global consultancy with intense local client relationships, a well-defined set of offerings across the entire digital transformation landscape, and a solid, sustained, evolutionary framework in BXT (Business-eXperience-Technology).

PwC gathered roughly 30 analysts, from Europe, Asia, India, and one from the U.S., for a dinner and then a day of client stories, PwC briefings and informal discussions in the firm’s Gurgaon Experience Center (EC), which was configured for the event to resemble a house, complete with a living room, dining room, garden, play room and kitchen (plus a library, but how many houses today have libraries?). The playful design of this ‘house’ idea was more than just design alone, with a real emphasis on PwC inviting clients and analysts in for the day to discuss, exchange and spend time together, much as one would do at home with friends and family. Over the course of the day, TBR met with PwC clients from across India and with the firm’s global leaders for Clients and Markets and Technology Consulting, as well as PwC partners and professionals responsible for client accounts in India, Japan and the Middle East.



- Understood the client’s customer. Beyond understanding clients’ business, operations and industry, along with the specifics of the India market, one client said PwC demonstrated a deep understanding of the client’s specific target audience and the personas shopping for this client’s specific product. As part of the engagement, and an element the client said was critical to its success, PwC colocated with the client a core team made up of more than 60% strategy, design and marketing consultants, with the remaining professionals handling technology.
- Possessed “skills, scale and speed.” While other clients cited the first two as PwC strengths, this client explained that “speed” referred to PwC’s ability to keep pace with the client’s accustomed pace of innovation, experimentation, adoption and change.
- Understood the client’s business with such depth and clarity that PwC could recommend what SAP customizations the client **did not** need. In TBR’s experience, every consultancy professes to know its clients well. In this case, the client explicitly understood that the long-term benefits from a massive SAP upgrade depended on minimal customizations in order to facilitate easier maintenance and upgrades. Surprisingly, the client went further in saying PwC was able to force the issue around standardizations by making compelling arguments that the client’s needs did not justify the diminished long-term value of customizations — compelling because PwC so fully understood the client’s business.

Also notable was the very presence of eight clients telling their stories — impressive for a one-day analyst event. TBR observed many of the clients attended breakout sessions with other clients, likely providing the firm with further opportunities to increase its footprint. Finally, the clients all told compelling stories, perhaps because the event was adamantly free of PowerPoint presentations (zero slides in 8 hours). Without slides as a crutch, clients (and PwC professionals and analysts) more easily adapted to the friends-and-family feel of the entire event.

📁 CYBERSECURITY AND BLOCKCHAIN: OLD AND NEW FOUNDATIONS OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

In addition to common themes around selecting PwC, the client stories also highlighted the firm’s broad range of capabilities, including strategy, design and marketing, emerging technologies, and standard SAP implementations, all falling somewhere along the spectrum of digital transformation. Notably, the event included multiple client stories centered on cybersecurity, as well as a separate breakout session detailing the firm’s India-based cybersecurity practice. One client described creating a digital transformation strategy including automation and migration to the cloud, which led it to seek PwC’s cybersecurity services as a necessary foundation. PwC developed a three-year security strategy for the client, including managed services and a pay-as-you-go component within the firm’s Cyber Fusion Center. Another client, a conglomerate with many different businesses, including banking, manufacturing and communications working across business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) business models, faced a cybersecurity challenge because of multiple regulatory bodies, necessitating multiple compliance requirements for different parts of the business. PwC worked with the client to create a cybersecurity solution that could “containerize risks” across the various businesses.

Among the emerging technologies described in the client stories, blockchain stood out based on PwC’s work with the government of West Bengal’s Department of Information Technology & Electronics and that department’s nodal agency, Webel. As a start, PwC and the client codeveloped a crowdfunding solution and subsequently worked on codeveloping an “Electronic Human Record” and created birth and death certificates, registered on immutable blockchain. The client noted that PwC suggested blockchain and went further, saying PwC consultants are “the technology people.” (Note:



While only one client said that explicitly, the sentiment that PwC is a technology firm came out repeatedly and denotes a substantial shift in client and market perception — and reality — over the last few years.)

▷ IN THE EC AND ACROSS PwC, TALENT REMAINS A DRIVING FORCE FOR CHANGE

TBR has visited many of PwC's ECs across the globe, and this was the first visit to one of the firm's five ECs across India. At every EC, TBR has discussed with PwC leaders the various successful elements of these centers, including how PwC uses ECs to work with clients, draw in new logos, partner with technology vendors, or attract and retain talent. On the last element, when PwC did bring up talent, the leaders framed the discussion around upskilling efforts both globally and in India. According to firm leaders, training around digital and PwC's Digital Fitness App have become the firm's "own best credential" when talking to clients about upskilling. The India member firm, according to its leadership, has tapped 60 professionals as digital "champions," following guidance from global leaders to make digital part of a "citizen-led transformation." PwC intends to "flip the mindset" that digital will replace jobs and people; instead, the firm wants its professionals to feel positive about, not threatened by, emerging technologies and digital expectations.

▷ BXT REMAINS STRONG, SUPPORTING AND CHANGING PwC OVERALL

Early in the day, Global Technology Consulting Leader Paul Gaynor noted that the firm's BXT approach is "how we sell and how we deliver," a sustained and consistent part of the firm's efforts to evolve itself and consulting. A midday mini-breakout session with three less experienced PwC professionals describing three BXT-infused engagements further cemented that the BXT concept, approach and execution remain a strong selling point for clients and for retaining top talent. In addition, throughout most of the client stories, elements of BXT emerged, particularly when clients sought transformations, not simply tech-enabled consulting engagements.

Putting the day into the larger context of TBR's analysis around digital transformation, PwC's changing business model, which includes an emphasis on managed services and a willingness to increasingly work with clients on outcomes-based engagements (rather than standard time and materials), allows the firm to more convincingly make the transformation case for clients. Two moments, spread out across the day, reinforced that overall assessment:

- In the opening session, Akira Kashima, PwC Japan Consulting Leader, explained one of the firm's initiatives around serving Japanese companies investing in India, especially in the smart infrastructure, manufacturing and energy industries. The PwC partner noted that many of the firm's Japanese financial sector clients had increased their investments in India, creating a vast array of opportunities for PwC to provide services and reshape its internal operations to support these cross-border initiatives.
- During one of the few full-group sessions, PwC's new global Clients and Markets leader, Stephen Anderson, who is based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, talked about the firm's efforts to help clients upskill their own talent as a key element to accelerating digital transformation. In TBR's research, skills development and change management frequently come up as pain points for clients undergoing transformations and consultancies have typically approached those separately, looking at developing the client's talent toward the middle or end of the engagement effort. Anderson shifted this process toward the start, noting PwC's approach serves as accelerant to decisions around and implementations of digital transformation: Build up the people, and they will push through the change on their own.



In all, PwC allowed clients to do most of the talking throughout the day. Their testimonials bode well for PwC's India practice and for the global firm. TBR will continue to track PwC's strategy, performance and relative progress across management consulting and digital transformation, with an expectation the firm will continue to lead its peers.

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