Advancing The Digital Age



When asked about the ominous timing of his company, McLaren Strategic Ventures, CEO Anubhav Saxena is completely at ease.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all aspects of life. However, as a firm focused on facilitating strategic digital partnerships, the timing of his launch turned out to be fortuitous. The lockdowns proved just how lost we'd be without digital companies. Covid-19 was the tipping point that transformed global businesses, across every industry, forever.

Over the centuries, Saxena recounts, catalysts for major shifts in technology have come in various forms. Inventions are one, particularly when they're made available to the masses. Wars and other catastrophic events are another.

Prior to Pearl Harbor in 1941, the vast majority of America's artillery was horse-led. When the U.S. officially entered World War II, factories had no choice but to begin manufacturing Jeeps and other gas-powered vehicles for the war effort. It was an enormous burden placed squarely on the shoulders of American businesses and yet, after just a few years of fast and hard-fought innovation, the U.S. won the war. It also paved the way for the modern automobile industry and changed the way we travel, work, and live.

Saxena says the world is at a similar point in 2021. On the heels of a global pandemic, digital companies, ones that use technology to create unique business models or customer experiences, are poised to change the world. According to a McKinsey analysis, the e-commerce market experienced ten years of growth in a three-month period in 2020.

The companies that delivered groceries during lockdown, provided support for overwhelmed hospital systems, and managed to create, distribute, and administer life-saving vaccines in an astonishingly short amount of time were all digital enterprises. "The speed at which research and rollout were accomplished was due to digital adoption," Saxena says, "With the vaccine, what would have taken years, took eight to ten months. Millions of

Economists have been urging companies to go digital for years. Covid-19 forced their hand. McLaren Strategic Ventures is giving businesses the means to modernize at warp speed by providing the capital, technology and operations needed to accelerate economic growth.

lives were saved, and livelihoods were protected, giving the future a chance."

The challenge is companies in the banking, financial services, insurance, and healthcare industries -- ones that have the potential to do groundbreaking work in the not-too distant future -- are not yet entirely digital. But Saxena's California-based digital accelerator is changing that, speeding up the digitization of these industries in collaboration with promising startups, scale-ups, and investors by providing a full range of highly trusted ,personalized domain consulting and advisory services, innovative technologies , distributed through admired ecosystems, globally.

"We're addressing the biggest societal needs through technology as we redefine the future of work, the workforce, and the workplace," he says. "And that is how the world races towards a digital future."

The UN's worldwide goal of establishing 600 million new, realistic, and long-term jobs by 2023, which inspired Saxena to helm this strategic venture firm in the first place, is an ambitious one. Saxena, who over the last 20 years helped drive colossal growth for Automation Anywhere, HCL Technologies, and Wipro Limited at the executive level, is an expert in job creation.

"Each digital job," he says, "creates 10 more jobs. I have always sought to create new categories of work, specifically ones that fulfill human potential and create measurable value for the surrounding community."

His goal at McLaren, however, is not to do it himself. Through partnerships and other ventures, he gives others the resources to create the newest jobs. In short, McLaren matches talent to opportunities -- specifically, firms or businesses that demand technically feasible and economically viable solutions.

That can happen in several different ways. One, through ecosystem distribution also called "Channel of Channels," a network of partners and alliances, two Joint Ventures through "Platform of platforms" that provide highly-trusted, personalized domain consulting, advisory services and innovative technologies, which create sustainable competitive advantages, three strategic acquisitions which are special purpose vehicles which carry the digital agenda, four strategic G2000 carve outs, which democratize digital innovation and make it available for wider adoption or five, special purpose acquisition companies (SPAC's) to help companies to go public.

"All of these come together to create the most sustainable jobs," Saxena says.

Sustainability is critical to each business decision he makes. "We do not engage in opportunistic pursuit," he says bluntly. "We're looking for sustainable jobs and wealth creation. It must be sustainable, just, and equitable."

To that end, his team is uniquely focused on new tech that has the most potential to improve communities and revitalize entire regions. He admits, "I say 'no' more often than 'yes.'"

Saxena recently said yes when they acquired Doran Jones, a women-owned tech consulting firm that specializes in capital markets, risk and regulatory requirements.

Doran Jones has a history of supporting mission critical businesses by hiring from underserved minorities and the veteran community. The firm, which will keep its offices in New York and Charlotte to stay close to its client base, "shares our passion for sustainable growth and value delivered through digital acceleration," Saxena says.

"The pace of digital change has never been faster. But, it will also never be this slow again" Saxena says. "The work we are doing will design and decide the future we live in".

In the meantime, Saxena predicts that McLaren SV will share two to three announcements each quarter moving forward. Each will introduce a new partnership, acquisition, SPAC, Joint venture or carve-out. The next one is scheduled for Fall of 2021.

Saxena isn't naming names just yet. "The first one is a joint venture involving the most pressing issues across the world on the issue of compliance. The world of regulation is changing. This will be extremely important in the financial community."

With a lineup of emerging names coming together under the McLaren banner, all on the forefront of technology and working toward a common goal, McLaren could emerge as the Berkshire Hathaway of digital companies. Saxena isn't ruling it out. "The numbers and the synergy," he concludes, "are definitely there." — **By Victoria Kertz, California Business Journal**

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