

# ADVANCHARGE, TRANSFORMING THE REALM OF OPERATIONS AUDITING WITH DIGITALISED SECTOR AGNOSTIC TOOL SIMSA

*"We are delighted to be acknowledged as the Company of the Year 2021. In our journey, we never gave a focus on participating for awards, as the priority has been developing the product and scaling the business. We were pleasantly surprised to receive this intimation, which also gives us the confidence that we are doing right things and moving in the right direction," shared Ashish Mendiratta, CEO and Director, Advancharge Pvt Ltd.*



Purnima Narang • The CEO Magazine

2019 incepted Advancharge is a start-up that provides an IT tool called SIMSA for transforming the Operational Audits, by automation of workflow, getting all stakeholders on common platform and detailed analytics. The idea was conceived when Ashish, along with his team, discovered the lack of visibility of the risks in the operations managed by the managers and dependence on internal or third-party audits to know about the gaps, violations, and exceptions.

As they incepted the SIMSA journey in 2019, the group of like-minded professionals with expertise in different aspects of operational excellence joined forces, consolidated the expertise, and know-how in the form of a technology product to scale up the offering. SIMSA is a tool to digitize and automate the operational audit process for several operations being a sector-agnostic tool.

Today, Advancharge's product roadmap includes the functionalities for remote audits, real-time audits and predictive risks analytics using Augmented reality and Machine Learning technologies. Uniquely, the tool processes and analyses the structured as well as unstructured data from CCTV cameras, IoTs, Voice data etc. to proactively predict the risks and suggest the preventive & corrective actions, called CAPA in operational excellence parlance.

With the SaaS-based subscription model and the Enterprise Model, small & medium enterprises demanding cost-effective and flexible solutions scaling up or down and companies with many audits to be conducted or specific security requirements around data can benefit respectively.

Having navigated through a journey surmounting the challenge of finding a deeper customer insight, deciding where to start, product

development, finding the right technology partner, and availability of funds being a bootstrapped company, Ashish conversed with The CEO Magazine and shared about different aspects of the journey. Edited excerpts:

**TCM: What are the most significant challenges you face today being at the forefront in your niche?**

**Ashish:** One of the major current challenges is finding the right talent for building a competent team for future growth. The other challenge is consistently to align the product to the latest technologies to provide the best experience to the clients.

**TCM: What according to you is your biggest USP that differentiates your organization from similar-sized players in the Indian market?**

**Ashish:** Most of the other players offer a solution to replicate the conventional audit process in the form of an application or tool. It

certainly offers certain benefits, such as, reducing the manual work but not being disruptive enough. We envision driving risks management using analytics and continuous monitoring instead of depending on the physical intervention of the auditors.

**TCM: Shed some light on your team. How did you build a dynamic team?**

**Ashish:** The co-founding team has extensive experience in manufacturing, supply chain & logistics domains, therefore, we understand the pain points in managing the operations effectively & efficiently. We are very careful in hiring the talent. Only those who believe and buy in our vision and are self-motivated are onboarded in the team. Our team members have sufficient freedom in decision making and are highly results-focused.

**TCM: What motivates you as a leader? And, how do you keep your team driven?**

**Ashish:** Our philosophy is that we build the teams and the team build the business. We know unless we focus on the development of the skills & knowledge of people and equip them with the right tools, we cannot scale up the business. We agree on the deliverables & provide them with the necessary support, then it is up to them how they achieve the deliverables. We don't do the micro-management & keep the focus on the performance.

**TCM: What are some of the key technological transformations in your space, especially post-pandemic?**

**Ashish:** During a pandemic, due to travel restrictions companies were finding it difficult to get the auditors at the site. To overcome the challenge, the

companies resorted to remote audits using make-shift tools. However, in the process they found it to be very cost-effective. Even post pandemic, companies are looking for more robust solutions for the remote audits so that it gets wider acceptance and also save time & cost.

**TCM: What are the awards and milestones that you are most proud of?**

**Ashish:** For us, our clients' appreciation is the award. We give a lot of importance to the clients' feedback and provide great support, starting with helping them configure the application. We also provide the domain knowledge in building the right checklists for their business, if required by them without any additional cost. The biggest milestone was winning the first Enterprise implementation for a large pharma company. That validated our thought process and boosted our morale to work more aggressively to achieve our vision.

**TCM: How would you define success? Is there a secret mantra to success?**

**Ashish:** Success is a journey and not a destination. Exceeding and not just meeting customer expectations is our mantra of success. We don't sell a product we solve customers' challenges & support them to create value for their business through cutting edge technologies. In short, we win, if our customers win.

**TCM: Could you talk about your company's business performance through 2020, key learnings, and your expansion plan for 2021?**

**Ashish:** In the year 2020, we were building the minimum viable product (MVP) to showcase to the potential customers. We didn't want to create a complex product from day one. We

used MVP to get feedback from various customers to validate and give a shape to the next level product. The next upgrade that we are currently working on is co-created along with the potential customers. With the upgraded product, we will have a much wider reach not just in India but also in the other markets.

**TCM: What advice would you give aspiring entrepreneurs looking to venture into the industry?**

**Ashish:** The aspiring entrepreneurs should take a plunge as there has never been a better ecosystem for start-ups. Even the big companies are willing to give opportunities to a start-up even though it may not have a long list of customers. However, this journey requires perseverance, patience and clarity of the vision. One mistake that many budding entrepreneurs make is that they get excited about an idea but don't spend enough time validating the idea with the actual users.

*“ We are very excited to receive this recognition and charged up to realize our goals. We firmly believe that we will emerge leaders in this space by developing solutions to help organizations to continuously improve operational efficiency while achieving the governance and compliance goals,”*

shared the leader