Most **Impressive Leaders** in Tech, Making Waves in the **Industry** 2024

Know your Leader
The Dynamic Attributes of Tech Leaders

Key Competencies for the Future
Developing Tech Leadership Skills

Subhash Kari
Chief Innovation Officer
Infocepts

Trailblazing in Tech:

SUBHASH Kari's

Impactful Role in Data Analytics and AI Innovation

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Subhash Kari—**Chief Innovation Officer** at **Infocepts**, https://www.infocepts.ai/ embarked on a journey of discovery that shaped his career trajectory in the realm of technology and innovation. It all began during his master's program at Michigan State, where Subhash contributed to a research project aimed at enhancing student learning outcomes through web-based assignments.

The project demonstrated the efficacy of feedback-oriented interactive tools and highlighted the potential for technology to revolutionize traditional processes while simultaneously reducing resource consumption. It ignited his passion for using technology to find better ways to do business. Moreover, Subhash recognized early on the importance of collaboration and cross-disciplinary skills in bringing such innovations to fruition.

Subhash's tenure at REI Systems solidified his expertise in leading transformative initiatives. Here, he spearheaded the development of a large-scale grants management system for the Department of Health and Human Services, digitizing healthcare administration for underserved communities. This endeavor underscored Subhash's ability to unite diverse stakeholders towards a common vision and inspire hundreds of team members to drive impactful change.

Building on this foundation, Subhash played a pivotal role in taking REI Systems' federal grants management capability to state & local governments through a cost-effective SaaS solution. This experience honed his strategic foresight and executive leadership skills, enabling him to navigate the intersection of disruptive innovations and established business practices with finesse.

Today, Subhash brings his wealth of experience and passion for innovation to the forefront of the commercial sector. With a keen eye for identifying emerging trends and a commitment to driving sustainable growth, Subhash is poised to lead Infocepts towards new heights of success in the dynamic landscape of Data & AI.

The Innovation Paradigm

Innovation, according to Subhash, is about '*finding valuable ways to solve new or existing problems*.' It encompasses various forms and isn't always about introducing new technology – it can involve creativity in processes, products, or experiences. Subhash emphasizes that sustainable differentiation through innovation involves combining different techniques into a proposition that offers unique value to both the beneficiary and the benefactor. Subhash's approach to innovation is guided by four principles:

- *Develop innovation as an organizational habit*: Subhash believes that innovation should be ingrained into the organizational culture rather than being a one-time occurrence or driven solely by events. Continuous innovation is essential for serving more customers, improving service quality, enhancing operational efficiency, and maintaining employee engagement.
- *Listen & learn with intent*: To identify valuable problems worth solving, Subhash accentuates the importance of actively listening to customers, users, and internal teams. This involves appreciating environmental factors such as emerging technologies, new regulations, and insights from various industries.
- *Experiment often & promote merit-based ideas*: Subhash advocates for creating an environment where everyone feels encouraged to contribute ideas within their domain. Ideas should be evaluated based on merit and evidence rather than on the individual's status or position.
- *Execute with rigor*: Subhash stresses the significance of rigorously evaluating ideas based on their ability to address specific needs, feasibility of execution, and strategic alignment with the company's objectives. While technical feasibility is important, successful execution also requires persistence, resourcefulness, and business acumen.

Unlocking Data Potential: Five Initiatives for Organizational Change

"*Executives today face unprecedented opportunities and challenges in leveraging data and AI to drive business success,*" Subhash remarks. To aid in navigating this landscape, Subhash, representing Infocepts, offers executives a concise guide outlining Five Data and AI Initiatives crucial for driving meaningful change within organizations in 2024. He believes that companies that integrate automated AI in redesigned business workflows are more likely to win in the long term over companies that use AI for incremental improvements.

Innovation Roadblocks

Subhash identifies two key challenges in driving innovation:

- *Dealing with inertia—the status quo*: Subhash observes that many organizations face resistance to change, often manifested as excuses like "*I'm too busy*" or "*We've always done it this way*." To address this challenge, Subhash suggests developing an '*innovation backlog*' that challenges the status quo. This involves asking leaders powerful questions to stimulate competitive change and foster a culture of innovation.
- *Mitigating risks while balancing risk-taking*: Subhash highlights the need to balance risk-taking with the necessity for iterations. He acknowledges concerns such as "*What happens if this doesn't work*?" or "*We will build it, and they'll use it*." To address this challenge, Subhash advocates for creating an environment where team members are permitted to fail as long as they learn from the experience. Validated learning is used to progress ideas while managing risk.

To steer teams effectively in addressing these challenges, Subhash emphasizes the importance of accountability. At Infocepts, Subhash established an '*innovation stewardship group*' tasked with guiding and reviewing commitments and results across the organization.

About
Infocepts

Infocepts is a leading data solutions firm dedicated to empowering businesses to achieve improved results through the effective use of Data, AI, and user-friendly analytics. They partner with their clients to solve the most common and complex challenges standing in the way of using data to drive informed business decisions.

For those seeking further information, visit Infocepts or connect via LinkedIn

If we find a
better way to
help clients
make progress,
we're not shy in
making that
known to their
executives."

Bringing Ideas to Life

"*At Infocepts, we believe in fostering a culture of innovation, and twice a year, we host an Innovation Day,*" says Subhash. This event allows employees to form self-organized teams and tackle challenges using their Kaizen platform.

During last fall's event, Subhash proudly recounts, "*We encouraged our employees to apply Generative AI to improve business outcomes.*" The response was impressive, with '***15% of our workforce coming together to submit 62 unique ideas***.' Through a rigorous selection process, "*we identified eight ideas with demonstrable proof of value for further investments.*"

Subhash underlines the importance of collaboration, stating, "*I've often found that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.*" He underscores the need for diverse groups to come together to achieve this synergy.

Exemplifying a collaborative approach, Subhash highlights a recent success, "*We developed Marketing360, which integrates ideas from our labs and client projects into a unified solution for CMOs.*" This offering demonstrates Infocepts' commitment to leveraging collective expertise to drive innovation and deliver value to clients.

Driving Business Success

Innovation is crucial for improving existing methods of transforming data into insights or creating new pathways for clients. Insights derived from data can significantly impact enterprises, helping them make or save money and reduce risk.

Subhash recounts a successful innovation project at Infocepts involving a media client operating in non-linear advertising. "*With the deprecation of third-party cookies, our client faced challenges in collecting behavioral attributes about viewers and demonstrating ad effectiveness,*" he explains. In response, Infocepts developed a solution that allowed the client's customers to enrich their target persona with audience data from the client platform using data clean rooms. This solution facilitated bi-directional sharing without violating privacy regulations.

The impact was significant, with Subhash proudly stating, "*Our client struck deals worth $100M in 2023 by delivering more effective ads.*" This success story exemplifies how innovative solutions can address complex challenges and drive tangible business outcomes for clients.

Mastering the Dynamics of Change

The pace at which the market and technology landscape is evolving is overwhelming. With over 2000 technologies in data and analytics, it's common for enterprises to juggle 20 or more. To navigate this dynamic environment, Subhash relies on three key techniques:

- *Investing personal time in research and listening*: Subhash emphasizes the importance of staying informed by dedicating 6-8 hours every week to activities such as attending conferences, reading books, and following industry discussions on platforms like Medium, Substack, LinkedIn, or HBR.
- *Applying systems thinking*: Subhash advocates for applying systems thinking to develop a comprehensive understanding of what's truly happening in the landscape. Reflecting on insights and engaging with peers helps cut through the noise. By identifying patterns, Subhash can make informed decisions for the long term.
- *Putting theory into practice*: Subhash stresses the significance of practical application for effective learning and knowledge retention. Doing is the best form of learning. Subhash actively seeks out relevant projects and contributes as a team member. He also emphasizes the value of hands-on experience, especially in understanding emerging technologies like AI, sometimes requiring him to '*roll up [his] sleeves and code*.'

Thriving in Uncertainty

"*I personally approach leadership from a business perspective—technology is just a means,*" Subhash stresses. The key question is: what's most important for my firm's long-term growth, and what can one do to catalyze it? To navigate the crowded Data & AI space and address the rapid evolution and market uncertainty, Subhash employs several principles at Infocepts:

- *Leading through change*: Subhash emphasizes the importance of continuously seeking ways to gain a

competitive advantage by introducing positive change when necessary. "*If we don't bring change, our customers will change us,*" he notes.

- **Alignment before autonomy**: Subhash recognizes that there are more possibilities than affordable options. To ensure alignment and effective progress, Infocepts establishes a common language that communicates organizational choices to leaders, enabling swift action.
- **Shift to competency-based skills**: With technology evolving rapidly, Infocepts adopts a competency-based framework for talent development. "*We teach AI Fluency first, then specific tools,*" Subhash explains. This approach ensures the team remains modern and adaptable to emerging technologies.
- **Adaptive resource allocation**: In response to evolving market conditions, Infocepts plans and allocates resources quarterly. Subhash emphasizes the importance of teamwork and resourcefulness in thriving within constraints.

Forward Thinking

Subhash explains that there are three key trends shaping the future:

- **AI/ML Industrialization**: AI has reached an inflection point, becoming a general-purpose technology like the internet. This transformation will impact every business and government agency in the next decade.
- **Platform Thinking**: Subhash highlights the importance of embracing platform thinking to maintain a sustainable advantage. Investing in capabilities to solve today's problems while preparing for tomorrow's challenges is crucial.
- **The Future of Work**: Subhash observes the shifting landscape of knowledge work due to technological evolution, post-pandemic work settings, and the characteristics of the rising Gen Z workforce. Adapting workforce strategy is essential for remaining competitive.

In response to these trends, Infocepts is making strategic choices:

- **Investing in productized solutions**: Infocepts offers solutions-as-a-service by combining expertise, technology, and features to solve specific problems through subscription-based models. DiscoverYai is an example of such a solution.
- **Embracing hyper-productivity**: Infocepts is leveraging a combination of human expertise and technology

to deliver 10x productivity in knowledge work. This is no longer science fiction.

- **AI-driven transformation program**: Recognizing the shift in deriving advantage from labor arbitrage to Data & AI, Infocepts has conceptualized an AI-driven transformation program for clients. Functions like marketing can be optimized to run at 20% of current headcounts. '*The question is, who will be the early adopters*?'

Preparing for the Future

"*We encourage a culture of curiosity,*" Subhash emphasizes, "*by continually reminding our teams that we exist to serve our customers and their needs and aspirations.*" This entails being obsessive about understanding their implicit and explicit needs and, more importantly, the WHY. Subhash underscores the importance of listening in dialogue, stating, "*The shift we need to make is to listen to understand rather than to respond.*"

To ensure readiness for the future, Infocepts relies on structured interventions for critical capabilities. For example, Subhash explains, "*We've launched an AI Fluency program to ensure every employee understands how AI can impact their role and to default our client-solutions to use AI.*"

Subhash highlights the significance of continuous learning. Embracing continuous learning is critical for an individual's career and role relevancy. While learning resources are made available, Subhash underscores that employees' learning journeys are driven by their own motivation, curiosity, and sense of adventure.

Transforming Businesses

Subhash explains, "*Our approach boils down to three success factors.*"

- **Customer journey mapping**: "*We help clients understand their relative maturity in the Data & AI space compared to global benchmarks,*" Subhash says. This involves creating a comprehensive data-driven assessment known as a customer journey map to guide their investments and strategy alignment, significantly contributing to their roadmap.
- **Investment in solutions and expertise**: Subhash highlights, "*To drive rapid progress, we've invested in a*

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dozen solutions addressing common and complex challenges." Additionally, Infocepts leverages its global expertise across 20 foundational components, ranging from modern data pipelines to generative AI. This comprehensive approach helps clients save time, money, and hassle from strategy to support.

- *Partnership approach*: Subhash emphasizes, *"We work with clients as a partner, not just an implementer, of their plans."* Infocepts takes pride in advising clients, acting on that advice and automating actions where possible. Subhash adds, *"If we find a better way to help clients make progress, we're not shy in making that known to their executives."*

Amplifying Impact

"Personally, I want to work on problems that matter in the world," Subhash reflects.

- *Addressing meaningful challenges*: There are many challenges that can be tackled through better applications of Data & AI. For instance, he mentions a collaboration with a cancer institute to enhance clinical operations and future research through data-driven approaches.
- *Bridging the gap between business & analytics*: Subhash highlights the need to bridge the gap between business and analytics worlds. A lot of time and money is being invested in new tech, yet businesses struggle to derive value rapidly. Infocepts is innovating with new product categories to address this challenge.
- *Scaling innovations*: Subhash expresses his focus on scaling innovations to increase their impact. *"This requires investments to penetrate new markets, ecosystem partnerships, and building a strong cadre of leadership passionate about our mission,"* he explains. Scaling innovations is key to maximizing the positive impact of their work in the world.◖

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Data & AI