Akara Research & Technologies:

Empowering Government through Data-Driven Solutions

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The civic-tech solutions industry plays a vital role in empowering governments by leveraging technology to improve governance and decision-making processes. These solutions aim to address information asymmetry challenges by providing data-driven insights and analytics. One prominent player in this industry is Akara Research & Technologies. As a data-science-driven firm specializing in geo-visual analytics, Akara is dedicated to solving information asymmetry problems for informed decision-making and improved governance. Its innovative and reliable products and solutions cover the entire data lifecycle, from data sourcing to the dissemination of processed information to various stakeholders. Let's hear more from Rohit Sabherwal, Co-Founder, Akara in the below snippets.

How do you see the Government Technology Solutions market evolving in India? What are the major factors that have been driving the market's growth?

The Government Technology Solutions market in India is expected to evolve based on several factors like the demands and expectations of citizens, the implementation of transparent citizen engagement through an Open-Data system, the adoption of digital transformation to improve service delivery, the establishment of interoperability to facilitate the seamless exchange of data and ensuring cybersecurity and data privacy for citizens, as well as fostering innovation from start-ups. These factors contribute to government investments in citizen-centric solutions like smart mAPPs, chatbots, real-time IoT data capture, cloud-based solutions with cybersecurity measures, data analytics, and geo-visualization. Additionally, the market growth will be driven by convergence solutions for governance that promote interoperability across different systems and platforms, as well as collaborations with start-ups that address everyday citizen issues.

How is your company positioned in this market? What are the major factors that set it apart from other players in the market?

Our company is well-positioned in the market to cater to the needs and challenges faced by governments, particularly Urban Municipal Bodies (ULBs). What sets us apart from other players is our diverse range of capabilities and expertise. We have a deep understanding of data, employ real-time technology effectively, possess

knowledge of GIS frameworks, and excel in data analytics. Our strong positioning is evident through our successful partnerships with major consulting firms to deliver Urban Governance solutions, as well as the recognition and awards we have received for the value our solutions provide to our clients.

The founders of Akara bring over two decades of experience in the data industry and possess domain expertise in Urban Governance issues. This expertise gives us a competitive edge in developing civic-tech solutions. We excel in various aspects such as data capture, designing and creating databases, application, and utilization of data, data analytics, and its visual representation through Geo-visualization. Our civic-tech solutions adhere to Open Data Standards and utilize low-cost, highly scalable, and secure technologies. The real-time nature of civic-tech solutions, combined with Geo-Statistical tools and Geo-visualization, enables easy access to data and swift intervention in resolving citizen-centric issues.

What were the challenges in building your data-driven tech platform for the world's largest Sanitation Assessment (2021)? How did you overcome them?

Developing the data-driven tech platform for 'Swachh Survekshan' to assess 4500 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) presented complex challenges. The platform acted as a bridge between the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and an independent third party for evaluation. Overcoming obstacles, such as integrating data, implementing validation, and ensuring seamless functionality, the team delivered a scalable solution, enabling transparent data capture and independent evaluation of ULBs. The successful collaboration with Quality Council of India (QCI) and support of MoHUA ensured the project's success.

What approach do you follow to ensure ROI for your solution? Please tell us about the uniqueness of your approach.

Our approach to ensuring ROI for our solution encompasses several key factors. We place a strong emphasis on clearly defining objectives, ensuring alignment between customer expectations and deliverables. Our solutions are designed to be scalable and customizable, allowing us to cater to the unique needs of different clients. Lastly, we adopt an end user-centric approach, prioritizing user adoption and satisfaction, which ultimately leads to a higher ROI.

The uniqueness of our approach lies in the deep understanding & expertise in various aspects of 'data'-capture, curation, processing, integration, analytics, mining, and visualization, combined with the use of appropriate technology, and GIS skills in an open-source environment. This combination enables us to deliver innovative solutions that facilitate informed decision-making for our clients.

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What is the future roadmap of your company? Are you working on any additions to your solutions and product portfolio?

As India continues to experience rapid urbanization, the demand for civic tech solutions for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) is set to grow exponentially. Acknowledging this trend, Akara is strategically investing in developing a product model for civic tech solutions, as opposed to creating customized solutions for each ULB.

Leveraging our extensive experience and domain expertise in building various civic tech solutions, we are channeling our efforts into product development. This product will encompass the entire cycle of managing Municipal Assets, including Inventorization, Operations & Maintenance, and Audit. We aim to create a state-of-the-art, scalable, and data-driven citizen-centric solution that effectively addresses the day-to-day challenges faced by municipalities. CIO