

'Salesforce creating solutions specifically for SME segment'

India is a key growth market for Salesforce and it has recently started a public services division in the country. **ARUNDHATI BHATTACHARYA**, CEO and chairperson of Salesforce India, talks about the public sector services, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and the small and medium enterprise (SME) segment, in an interview with **Ayushman Baruah** in Bengaluru. Edited excerpts:

What was the premise for Salesforce recently launching public sector services in India?

In most jurisdictions, the public sector has a particular process of doing things, and you need to be attuned to that process because their RFPs are very detailed and their entire process has many stages to it. We have very large public sector organisations in the US, Japan, Australia, and most European countries. So we have a lot of offerings that we do and that we work alongside the public sector here in India. We have now started it as a separate division. Earlier, we had one or two clients in this space, but they were done as part of other industry verticals such as energy utilities or banking and finance sector.

Why now and what are the factors driving this?

We felt that we were now ready. India's sales and distribution piece has really been seriously taken only in the last seven years. So, we also needed to mature and understand what the government's requirements were, how we could go about it, create those relationships with partners, and make sure that we have implementations. So we felt this was the right time. We are doing it with so many governments around the globe and we can do it here as well. We would also like to give whatever cutting-edge technology solutions we have to the government over here.

What's your focus on the SME segment in India?

We are trying and creating solutions that are specifically for the SME segment. The pricing model will be different. The product will be different. At this point of time, we already have such a product. But again, it is not exactly what the Indian ecosystem needs. If you look at the sheer number of clients, the SMEs will be far more. They are of a smaller ticket size, but they are basically the growth engine for new accounts.

How is Salesforce using AI for these services?

At Salesforce, we create customer experience with people, including your own employees – basically wherever there are human interactions. Salesforce tries to provide solutions for ensuring that those interactions and experiences are superior. We play in service, marketing, commerce, integration,

analytics, enablement, industry-wide solutions. The use of AI is going to make all of these more efficient and more productive. So if I am doing sales, the use of AI can give me a much better outcome of the sales that we are doing by predicting which opportunities are the ones that are more likely to close and which ones need more work. AI enables services to give not only the right answers at a fast, shorter time, but also helps them connect with the customer to make the right suggestions.

What is Salesforce doing in the area of responsible AI?

We started our AI journey in 2014. We are extremely aware of the fact these are powerful tools and while there could be good results, one could also get adverse results if they are not in the right hands. The five values we have are: trust, customer

success, innovation, equality, and sustainability. Now, whenever we are putting out a product or a process, it needs to tick all of these boxes before they are released.



ARUNDHATI BHATTACHARYA
CEO & Chairperson,
Salesforce India

