

## THE GROUP OF ANALYSTS

Temel Kahyaoglu, Chief Analyst TGOA, in conversation with

# Upen Varanasi

## CEO Riversand on what the future of Master Data Management looks like



Upen Varanasi sets the overall strategy and vision for Riversand. He brings extensive experience in the areas of PIM, PLM and Content Management. A University of Missouri and IIT alumnus, Upen holds Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Mechanical Engineering.

Upen Varanasi discusses the changing dynamics in Master Data Management and Product Information Management solutions. B2B customers want to gain insights and be able to measure the impact of the technology solutions they chose for their business. Data Management is the foundation of leaders who have pivoted to lead their company with a data-centric strategy. Central to this strategy is a Next-generation Master Data Management and Product Information Management which will provide Relevance and Insights to business in addition to Trusted data. As business continue to meet consumers in near real-time basis, they are looking at harnessing these interactions to gain critical insights and provide relevant information to their consumers. B2B customers want to be able to manage this explosive data growth with a scalable, feature rich Data Management solution that provides the best user experience.

### What are your thoughts on the future of Data Management?

What we are witnessing in the world today is that Business and IT leaders are converging from their individual schools of thought. To define, differentiate and dominate their business, they are investing heavily in technology. Worldwide, leaders are investing in technology at a rate of growth of Global GDP, and investment in enterprise software is growing at more than twice that rate. In North America alone, leaders and entrepreneurs are spending more than a trillion dollars on technology. Manufacturing, Retail, and Distribution are growing at a healthy clip, and supporting technology investments is in the range of \$50 to \$100 billion in each vertical. Technology investments support the rapid rate of new product introduction, distribution, sales, marketing through various channels, and meeting customers at every door. Growth in Omnichannel sales, mobility, and IoT has and will continue to bring a massive amount of data through all phases of business operation.

### What do you see as the future of Master Data Management and Product Information Management?

It is no longer enough to provide just trusted data. It is an inside-looking-out process, of ensuring that data within the four walls are accurate, complete and rich. These are lengthy processes which are reviewed and revised on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Consumers are meeting brands and retailers in the physical and digital world and are giving feedback on near-real-time basis. In the world where data is increasing in volume, velocity, and variety, harnessing the power of these new data is foundational to running businesses. Current Master Data Management and Product Information Management solutions need to evolve to incorporate this outside-looking-in approach to data at the same speed so that they can derive insights and provide relevant information.

When we bring all this newly discovered data together, we are looking at massive amounts of data, data we know and data we don't yet know. There is a lot of interaction between data (both externally and internally), and harnessing these interactions can provide surprising insights. We are talking about interactions from consumers' product sentiments, between assortments, channels, competition, etc. Add to this the dimension of IoT. Connected devices in manufacturing, energy and public sectors will mask the amount of data explosion we have seen to date, bringing fascinating, MDM-related applications along with it. The future of Master Data Management is a platform on which there are applications that provide not only Trust but also Relevance and Insights to business.

### How was 2016 for Riversand?

Riversand had a phenomenal 2016. We signed clients from small business to very large enterprises. We expanded in the UK through various customer acquisitions. Our existing customers expanded our offering to other brands, sister businesses, and geographies. We strengthened our partnership with key global service providers. Our partners developed our practice across the globe through their Center of Excellence. »

Riversand has expanded across geography, grown across verticals and catered its offerings to organisations of varying sizes. We have defied the market-observed cloud-MDM growth (reported in single digits) by recording more than two-thirds of our sales as cloud-MDM. Riversand has onboarded 30% additional partners since 2015 and executed more than 40% implementations jointly with partners. All along, Riversand has pivoted to disrupt Data Management Platforms and Products.

This combined dynamics has challenged Riversand. We have put certain measures in place to support stronger growth than what we saw in 2016. We are excited about how things are shaping up.

#### Is the technology landscape within MDM changing?

Enterprises are investing in technologies that aid their revenue growth and in technologies that improve their net profit, as well. Customers are limiting expenditures on internal infrastructure costs and investing in technology that offers multi-tenant or hybrid cloud-based solutions. Not just small enterprises, even large enterprises are moving in the direction of adopting open-source technology and moving existing applications to the cloud.

Beyond reducing costs, cloud-first thinking will be the future of data management platforms and applications. Riversand sees an accelerated adoption of cloud-based MDM solutions. Two-thirds of our deployments in 2016 were cloud-based. Cloud-based solutions have already created a foundation amongst a growing number of retailers and several brands with a huge DTC footprint. With a cloud-based MDM and PIM, clients will be able to reduce their internal costs, integrate with other cloud-based solutions, onboard data from vendors, data pools, content aggregators and syndicate to omnichannel landscape quickly.

#### What can you say about your latest company/product review by Forrester and Gartner?

Forrester rated us as a leader in their latest PIM Wave Report. This is the second time in a row we have been rated as a leader in Forrester's PIM Wave Report. We have been leaders in Gartner's Magic Quadrant (MQ) for Product MDM for 3 years. Gartner introduced a new MQ this year. This is their first MQ for Master Data Management solutions. They have retired their previous MQs focussed on Product and Customer data. Changing customer behaviour towards a multidomain requirement has influenced the need for the introduction of this new MQ. All solution providers have been rated as a company irrespective of the product(s) they provide in the space. Previously, Riversand was listed only in the Product MDM and not in the Customer MDM. Riversand's rating as visionary in this new MQ for Master Data Management solution tells the market that we are a mature, multidomain MDM solution provider and that our vision for next-generation MDM solutions is where customers want to be.

#### How is 2017 and beyond looking for Riversand?

Our customers want to understand why they are implementing a technology and they want to gain insights from the technology they have chosen. They want to ensure that technologies are aligned with their business strategy and operational excellence. All this while keeping cost low. They expect the same from MDM and PIM solutions. We started a journey from 2015 that crystallised in 2016 in what we call a MDM 2.0 and PIM 2.0 vision. We are executing on a very aggressive timeline to make this vision a reality. A glimpse of this was announced to the public in August 2016 when we brought out the concepts of Dynamic Governance with Information Governance and Reporting. In the next few months, we will be bringing to our customers and the market the best enterprise-scale, cloud-based PIM and MDM solution, with a fresh and modern user interface to provide a highly intuitive user experience.

As our customers grow organically and through acquisitions, managing data across their application landscape has become central for them. We are collaborating with our customers to bring their global business complexities under one solution that is web-scale, dynamically configurable and which offers the best user experience. We are developing (internally and with partners) applications that sit on top of the platform to address use cases for each vertical. This will minimise the need for configurability and accelerate deployment.

Beyond innovation, we have reorganised ourselves with the customer in mind to improve their satisfaction and success. In this new structure, we have created a customer and partner services organisation and business units to manage small-to-mid and mid-to-large sales and execution.

#### Any parting thoughts that you would like to share with the market?

Enterprise software solutions are going through a revolution to accommodate explosive growth at low cost. B2B users want to ensure that technologies they have chosen align with their long term business strategy, operational excellence and which provide insights to improve their growth. As business grows organically and through acquisitions, managing data across their application landscape becomes central for them. To bring their global business complexities under one solution that is web-scale, dynamically configurable and which offers the best user experience, enterprise MDM and PIM solutions need to evolve. In our MDM 2.0 roadmap, Riversand is bringing together scale, flexibility and feature-rich solution with a cloud-first approach, to the market.

---

#### VENDOR

*Riversand is an innovative leader in Master Data Management and is leading the next-generation MDM solution offering at web scale using Big Data, NoSQL technologies to bring features such as Dynamic Governance, Adaptive Workflows, rich User Experience and more. Riversand provides a single, integrated, scalable, and robust MDM platform that caters to a variety of use cases across multiple verticals from Small to Very Large enterprises.*

*Riversand Technologies Inc.  
support@riversand.com  
riversand.com*