



Speaker Interview with **Vishal Mehta** – *Head of Digital Strategy, Architecture and Technology, Reliance Industries Ltd*

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**1. What are downstream operators doing to improve productivity and efficiency? What more can they do?**

Due to the changes in the overall economic environment, there is increased pressure to make the assets of the downstream operators more agile, flexible and decision making faster. A lot of operators are limited in terms of large capital spends and thus we don't see a lot of new projects being announced. But the investments in making the decision support systems, the way we access and analyse data is increasing. With pressure on demand and margins and limited capital outlays the key differentiation between the top performing downstream companies and the ones which are making lower margins is how they use data to remain at the top of the productivity and efficiency performance and the speed at which they respond to the market dynamics.

So a lot of value can be derived from studying the way they do business, the way they operate and change those by enabling a digitally powered way of working where a lot of time to decision and steps needed to arrive at a decision can be shortened. The interrelation of historic data from assets and its linkages to how you procure crude or make products has inter-relations which can be exploited by using advanced math and algorithms which are still not being used. So there is a lot of opportunity still to be capitalised using the same physical assets by using the easily available technologies and falling computing costs.

**2. The collection of data is not new within the refining and petrochemical industry – how is data analytics changing the way information and data is being used?**

Collection of data for running the refinery was there since a long time, what has changed is the frequency, quality, reliability and the purpose has changed coupled with dramatic downward shift in cost of acquiring data. As targets become more stringent and margin of errors become lower due to the competitive scenarios in the global commodity space, the assets need to run as close to **or**

**better** than what was planned. The era of preventive is over. Now it's about predicting failures or degradation with a lot of relational data analysis of elements which were not traditionally looked at to predict failures. Asset reliability is central to the downstream business and there are a lot of platforms where companies are leveraging IoT and advanced analytics to run assets with greater predictability of reliability.

### **3. What will be the highlight of your presentation at Asian Downstream Week?**

The downstream industry is faced with multiple external factors and challenges such as market volatility, complexity of multiple factors and speed of change. Also the convergence of automation, IoT, Data and process flows and Analytics will fundamentally change the way businesses in the downstream are run. There is an opportunity in using these technologies and the next level of digital enablement could mean differentiating the leaders from the rest.