

# THE DISRUPTOR

## From Pilot to Powerhouse: Scaling Smarter in the UK, Europe, Philippines & India



**Dharam Gurbani**  
Chief Growth Officer - Global Growth Markets  
Ascension

Last year, AI was a curiosity. Today, it's a boardroom mandate.

Across my conversations with CXOs in the UK, Philippines, and India, a clear shift is taking place. Leaders are no longer asking, "Should we explore AI?" They're asking, "How do we scale faster, smarter, and more sustainably—with AI at the core?"

At Ascension, we see it every day—AI is not just transforming business models, it's rewriting the rules of speed, efficiency, and value creation.

### From Curiosity to Commitment

Just 12 months ago, European clients were focused on experimenting pilots, proofs of concepts, and experimentation dominated the landscape. AI was treated as a promising tool, but not yet a critical engine of transformation.



That's no longer the case.

Today, the same clients—particularly in the UK—are walking into boardrooms with AI on the agenda. CIOs and CTOs are being asked to justify how AI investments will impact topline growth and bottom-line efficiency. The conversation has matured rapidly. AI has moved from the lab to the boardroom—and now, to the frontlines of customer operations, product development, and internal efficiency.

This is the most exciting shift I've seen in over two decades of technology leadership.

### Regional Realities: Tailoring AI for Diverse Markets

#### United Kingdom: Fast-Forwarding Impact

The UK is clearly ahead of the curve, both in mindset and maturity. Clients are not just looking to digitize existing workflows, they are reimagining the entire architecture of business through AI.



Take our engagement with a well-known British retail bank. They wanted to modernize but didn't have the luxury of multi-million-dollar, multi-year core platform overhauls. Instead of recommending a full rip-and-replace, we leveraged our AI engineering platform, AAVA™, to enhance what was already working. The result? Customer onboarding time was reduced dramatically, and our solution delivered what other partners estimated would take three years—in just nine months. Faster, cheaper, better. That's what AI at the core can do.



## Philippines: Bold Moves, Big Rewards

In APAC, and specifically in the Philippines, we're seeing a different, but equally powerful kind of shift.

The region is rich with talent and innovation. Budgets may not match Europe's scale, but the willingness to leap ahead is unmistakable. Take our work with a leading Southeast Asian super-app for example. By implementing a scalable micro-services architecture with DevOps and automated testing, we grew its user base from 20 to 90 million in five years while enhancing engagement and reliability. More recently, we launched a next-generation Global Capability Center in Cebu—an AI-native hub that's redefining digital operations, customer experience, and enterprise enablement. Equipped with our proprietary GCC^AI solution, the centre is designed to accelerate delivery velocity and bring real-time transparency across business functions like engineering, HR, and customer service.

Also fuelling this momentum is our AI Studio in **Manila**, a centre of excellence for AI-led software engineering and rapid prototyping. Designed to serve clients across BFSI, digital commerce, and retail, the studio brings together innovation, talent, and speed. This is the kind of impact we're scaling across industries: not just incremental improvements, but fundamental transformation. As the Philippines positions itself as a global AI hub, Ascendion is proud to be at the forefront—transforming ambition into measurable outcomes.

## India: Talent-Rich, Transformation-Ready

India is at a tipping point in its AI journey. While many enterprises are still experimenting through small-scale pilots, the appetite for adoption is strong.

Large organizations are cautiously moving toward scalable use cases—aiming to enhance customer experience, optimize operations, and unlock new value. Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) are embedding AI into the core of their platforms, investing deeply in R&D to drive global competitiveness. Startups, unburdened by legacy systems, are taking bold bets across fintech, edtech, logistics, and healthcare—leading the charge in generative AI, vertical LLMs, and full-stack automation. The Indian AI landscape is anything but uniform; it's a mixed bag, driven by ambition, agility, and innovation.

At the centre of this momentum are Ascendion's AI Studios in **Chennai** and **Hyderabad**, purpose-built to accelerate AI innovation. These are not just delivery centres, but collaborative innovation hubs where we co-create with clients, prototype quickly, and deploy enterprise-grade AI solutions. Our teams build domain-specific accelerators, fine-tune models for industry relevance, and help organizations shift from experimentation to real-world impact. As India pushes forward in AI maturity, Ascendion is enabling the ecosystem with the talent, platforms, and speed needed to turn intent into transformation.





## Ascendion's AI-First Playbook

Every market is unique but our approach remains consistent: AI-first, outcome-driven.

Here's how we're helping enterprises scale faster and smarter:

### 1. Change Management with Empathy

AI transformation is not just about code—it's about people. We work closely with our clients to lead them through the change journey, from mindset shifts to upskilling initiatives. The days of 7-year ERP rollouts are over. Now, transformation needs to happen in 18 months or less—and we make that possible, by bringing business and technology stakeholders together from Day 1.

### 2. Deconstructing Complexity

We help organizations break down complex transformations into smaller, modular outcomes. A 5-year vision is important, but value must be delivered in 6-month increments. By solving real business problems in bite-sized phases, we help build confidence across teams, and momentum across projects.

### 3. Speed to Value Through AI-Engineered Delivery

Speed matters. In a market where the pace of change is relentless, we bring AI-powered delivery engines that help clients launch faster, learn faster, and scale faster. AAVA™, supported by domain-specific accelerators, ensures our clients get to value in months, not years.

## What's Next: Real Outcomes, Not Just Conversations

I've sat in too many SteerCo meetings where AI was called "the future." But the future is here. The conversations I'm having with CXOs today are no longer theoretical, they're about execution: shortening product cycles, minimizing operational errors, and embedding AI natively into business workflows.

These are not theoretical questions. They're execution priorities.

As enterprises accelerate their AI journeys, ambition must be matched with discipline. The market is flooded with platforms promising quick wins, but enterprise complexity demands more than "buy and bolt-on" solutions. Success hinges on aligning AI with existing architectures, integration paths, and real-world data conditions.



Data remains the biggest hurdle. Many initiatives falter due to outdated, fragmented, or unstructured data. No AI model can deliver impact without clean, governed, and continuously enriched data pipelines. Equally critical is building for trust—solutions must be secure, ethical, and explainable to meet regulatory expectations and stakeholder confidence.

And that's where Ascendion's DNA comes in. We were built to help enterprises take AI to the last mile. We bring the tech, the talent, and the trust to co-create what comes next. In a world that's rapidly changing, businesses need more than just a vendor—they need a partner who can guide them through every step of the journey. That's where we come in. We don't just deliver technology solutions—we help businesses rethink their approach, optimize their processes, and drive long-term growth. We empower our clients to innovate and scale with AI at the heart of everything they do.

## About the Author



Dharam Gurbani is a business transformation leader and growth strategist who thrives on driving market expansion, revenue acceleration, and digital innovation. As Chief Growth Officer for UK, Europe & Asia Pacific at Ascendion, he leads strategic business expansion projects, playing a crucial role in defining the company's next phase of growth and global impact.

With over 20 years of experience, Dharam has spearheaded high-impact strategies across retail, consumer goods, manufacturing, and technology. He has also held key executive roles at LTIMindtree, Mindtree, and Essentra, where he led large-scale digital transformation and business reinvention.

When he's not leading business transformation, Dharam enjoys exploring new destinations on his motorcycle or delving into the world of cinema.

Ascendion is an AI-powered software engineering leader. We serve over 400 global clients with software engineering, cloud, data, experience design, and workforce transformation solutions. Powered by +11,000 Ascenders around the world, a bold culture, and our proprietary Engineering (Engineering to the Power of AI) approach, we help businesses unlock value, accelerate growth, and impact lives. Headquartered in New Jersey, Ascendion combines scale, agility, and ingenuity to engineer what's next. Learn more at [ascendion.com](https://ascendion.com).

