Banking brilliance

With a 326-year-old heritage, Barclays is a company that exhibits the knowledge and experience of an elder with the keen and fresh outlook of a millennial ready to adapt to the changing global climate.

Every time you use an ATM, you have Barclays to thank. Having launched the first ‘robot cashier’ in 1967 to allow banks to operate all day and year-round, the company boasts a rich and long history of innovation and excellence. It was the first British bank to operate an all-purpose credit card in 1966, the first debit card in 1987, the first contactless cards, and much more. And Barclays is just as dedicated to inventiveness and adaptation today as it was in decades past.

Last year, Barclays introduced SmartBusiness, an online data insights service which enables business owners to access the power of a market research department without the added obstacles of high cost and time investment. Inventions of this sort hold the potential to revolutionise the way small businesses analyse and respond to the market, considering recent One Poll research, which finds that 56 per cent of SMEs rarely check their data.
According to Ashok Vaswani, CEO UK of Barclays, there has been no shortage of positive changes as the company has embarked on what has come to be a significant transformational journey over the past four years. “We have got a complete condition and history of innovation,” he says. “It is our DNA to deliver banking for the future.” The other main aspect Ashok believes sets Barclays apart from its competitors is the company’s focus on ameliorating societal issues. “I sincerely believe that a company can only win if it solves a societal problem,” he declares. “If you are not solving a societal problem, then frankly, who cares whether the company survives or not?”

Keeping true to this belief, Barclays has engaged in projects aimed at making a difference. “The digital revolution is here whether we like it or not, and we are committed to moving everybody forward in the digital age — whether it’s teaching kids coding in our branches, helping people move from the school place to the workplace with our LifeSkills program, or assisting those with vulnerabilities and disabilities with our Digital Eagles program,” he explains. “The fastest-growing age community in this country is the 60-plus age segment, and helping them do things on their own and gain independence with their finances is a big deal.”

As of now, the company has guided more than 2.8 million people through its Barclays LifeSkills program and turned more than 16,000 of its staff in the UK, into Digital Eagles who volunteer their time to explain new technology to their colleagues and the public. “I think these are the factors which really make us stand out, and I am hoping they will be the recipe to make us win,” Ashok explains. The company approaches its supply chain and operational division with similar care and diligence. “We are very careful about the way we procure,” he says. “Procurement is not just about getting that one pence cheaper — of course price is very important, but the societal goals and the product is equally as important to us. We work very closely with our vendors on wellness, mental health and diversity, for example, and we extend a lot of these programs across to our vendors’ apprenticeships to make it a true partnership.”

In terms of the customer, Barclays focuses on providing the newest and most effective services to ensure satisfaction. “We are truly customer-centric,” he says. “If you estimate there are roughly 58 million people in the UK aged over 15 and we virtually have some relationship with one out of every two, then our ability to actually do more with these individuals — understand them better, and meet their financial needs — is a very compelling kind of regime.”

“One way Barclays aims to do this is through better utilising digital practices and their possibilities. ‘We already have leading positions in a number of our products, but with digital we can take it much further. Whether it’s in the payment space, transactional space, credit card space, wealth space, or our business banking plans, digital offers a tremendous opportunity for us to be able to meet the needs of clients in a completely new and unique way.’

Digitally, the company has moved forward significantly. While three years ago there were zero customers accessing services on their mobile phones, for example, today that figure has reached 5.2 million, with customers accessing the Barclays mobile bank app 28 times a month on average. The mobile system accounts for 92 per cent of all payments and transfers, 53 per cent of all account openings, 54 per cent of all overdrafts, and 52 per cent of all loans, says Ashok. “We have fundamentally transformed the way the customer interacts with us.”

In addition, about 500 branches have installed new, personally designed machines fitted to allow customers to do everything they need, whether they want to withdraw or deposit cash, deposit cheques, or make payments or transfers. The systems are the first in the industry and in the UK. “Not only are they beneficial and efficient for the customer, but for the company as well,” he says. “We now have an electronic machine where you put the cascade of cash into the machine and the machine does all the automatic counting and delivers the report. What took a person two and a half hours every evening now gets done in about 15 minutes.”

Furthermore, the bank is the first across Europe to have launched video banking, a feature which allows customers to communicate with a live person 24/7 from wherever they are in the world. Long before that, it introduced Smart Call, which enabled secure calls to Barclays to be made through the mobile app. And in 2016, it extended the roll-out of voice security, which enables users to bypass entering tedious security details by identifying the individual based on a voice recognition system.

Achievements and innovations aside, Ashok believes that success and accomplishment in the end truly comes down to getting it right for society. “It’s really about how you can move quickly and get to a stage where the team is empowered and passionate about doing the right thing around the customer,” he says. “If we can get that equation right, then usually everything else kind of falls into place.”
Founded in 2005, Gibbs S3 identified the upcoming tidal wave of digital disruption which is now dominating the marketplace, particularly that of the world’s largest brands. Gibbs S3 took the lead and created an innovative set of solutions to deliver a pipeline of digital talent and quality at speed. This was born out of their commitment to support global brands to survive and grow in the new digital landscape.

Digital trends, such as Mobile Technologies, Big Data, Cloud Computing, Cyber Security and Internet of Things, present both opportunities and threats for companies looking to build confidence in their digital capabilities. Gibbs S3 helps its blue chip clients take advantage of the opportunity presented by these technological trends, as it specialises in identifying the right technology professionals to support next generation transformation projects.

In 2015, the company posted UK sales revenue of £49m and after 5 years of trading as Gibbs S3, achieved a Compound Annual Growth Rate of more than 36%. Due to the expansive growth of the digital market, Gibbs S3 has seen the group global revenue grow to £233m in 2015. World-wide brands operating in a variety of sectors such as Financial Services are attracted to Gibbs S3, whose core values echo their culture of transparency, accountability and robust governance. Working on a partnership model, Gibbs S3 takes ultimate responsibility and exercises effective control of clients’ talent supply chains.

Gibbs S3 is a Tier 1 supplier to FTSE 100 companies. We deliver Talent and Human Capital solutions that work the way our customers work because no one organisation and its people are the same. Ours is an intuitive solution that evolves – harnessing our people and technology, we constantly innovate and push the boundaries so as to keep pace with industry trends and stay ahead of the curve.

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Gibbs S3 understands compliance staffing needs and the driving forces for security.

Gibbs S3 understands all roles in the SDLC need to be cloud savvy.

Gibbs S3 believes total mobility starts at home as it moves to a cloud based internal ecosystem and develops a contractor engagement platform to enhance its leading contractor care.

The demand for digital skills is high, and supply is low, with 745,000 additional workers to be required by 2017.