



dialogues (with Maya). The demonstration looked promising and kick-started Maya's launch in the retail industry. The 30-member Manthan's AI R & D team of majors in Natural Language Processing (NLP), Machine Learning, and Mathematics and Statistics had utilized over \$7.5 million and spent 3 years to build the disruptive innovation, Maya<sup>1</sup>. It was commended as the 'coolest innovation of the year' in the NRF conference. Atul Jalan, Chief Executive Officer of Manthan, ascertained that Maya was the first and foremost virtual assistant in the world to be integrated with business information systems, and was virtually indistinguishable from magic. He envisaged Maya to lead the radical transformation of business operations to zero-touch user interfaces and voice-based interactions.

At this juncture, Batra had to ride the expectations of his CEO by marketing the product appropriately to all the C-suite positions (for example, chief executive officer, chief financial officer, chief operating officer, chief information officer and chief marketing officer). However, Batra was aware of the challenges ahead. He opined:

*"Since we launched Maya, we have spoken to 10-15 top analysts in our industry globally, and they have acknowledged this as a unique product ... however when you have such disruptive technology, adoption is not a given. Now that we have opened a can of worms, the challenges are that people's expectations have skyrocketed. They reckon Maya to be able to answer any kind of questions. In order to meet such expectations, you have to deal with domain specific data and algorithms, but there is no one-size-fits-all approach."*