

# Covid accelerated digital journey: HUL

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**H**industan Unilever Ltd banked on data-driven decision-making to ensure supplies of essential products when India was under a strict lockdown a year ago, Sanjiv Mehta, chairman and managing director of the country's largest packaged consumer goods company said at Amazon's flagship Smbhav event on Friday.

"The true strength of Hindustan Unilever's prowess in technology and data-driven decision-making came to fore during the pandemic, when digital journeys managed to mitigate many of the challenges faced due to physical restrictions," Mehta said, while addressing a session on the second day of Smbhav Summit, e-commerce marketplace Amazon's event focused on small businesses.



The true strength of HUL's prowess in data-led decision making came to fore during the pandemic, said CMD Sanjiv Mehta. MINT

Mehta was talking about leading business through a pandemic.

The pandemic accelerated the country's digital journey with many citizens moving online for the first time, whether to get news or to source essentials, he said. "We witnessed how enterprises that had adopted digital technologies in the core of the business were less impacted than others.

Many SMEs in India are at low level of digitization, and there is growing awareness of the handicap it creates..." he said.

Fast-moving consumer goods makers had to deal with issues such as access to market during the lockdown as most of the country remained shut. Even though grocery stores remained open, getting products from warehouses to end stores posed a challenge. Sev-

eral companies tapped into business-to-business apps to fulfil such orders.

"For instance, Shikhar, which is a B2B ordering app, enables hundreds of thousands of retailers to place contactless orders and provided them visibility into the fulfilment of those orders through logistic tie-ups and intuitive interfaces. The momentum on technology and digitization should be leveraged to make a fundamental shift in not only business processes, but also in education, healthcare, governance, creating jobs and easing the pressure on big cities while bringing development across the country," said Mehta.

The pandemic also highlighted the need for a nimble supply chain, he said. This was demonstrated in the way companies forged partnerships to meet consumer demand for essentials and stepped up production of essential supplies.