



Service Sector: Taking the smarter route

The story of India's economic rise in the last ten years is a unique one with the services sector leading the way. With a huge contribution to India's GDP and a large segment of the population working for it, the services sector has given birth to an entirely new middle class in India. The well-educated, high earning service professionals are not only setting up global service delivery benchmarks but also have a penchant for consuming world-class services themselves. Probably this is why, our banks, airports and restaurants look completely different from the recent past.

Given India's large pool of talented human resources and tremendous growth prospects as a market, services will remain central to its future. While the opportunities are lucrative, the slowdown in the global economy and moderation in domestic growth has forced the industry to introspect. Right from telecom to hospitality, virtually every major vertical of the services sector has gone through a rough patch in the last couple of years and is working towards invigoration of its business model. Business continuity, innovation, efficiency, customer delight and risk mitigation are the key areas that demand attention. Information technology being central to India's service sector story is now helping the industry address these issues effectively.

Companies like Cisco are bringing their global experience, methodical approach and technology leadership together to

help Indian service sector extend its terrific value creation run. Anil Bhasin, Sr. Vice President, Services, Cisco, India and SAARC says, "At Cisco, we work with some of the biggest service organizations in the world. Our global experience has made us realize that, to deliver exceptional customer experience, a unique mix of architecture solutions, technology prowess and effective service delivery is imperative. Bringing all these together makes the Cisco Services truly unique." Let's take a closer look at how Cisco with its services capabilities is helping the Indian services sector become smarter.

Support business continuity, growth, and innovation

With age old businesses going out of business in a flash, business continuity and growth cannot be taken for granted in the present economic scenario. Businesses around the world, especially in

the services space are continuously innovating and improvising to serve their customers better. Today, innovation has become central to the idea of rendering services, whether it is the banks offering mobile banking services or the hospitals offering telemedicine solutions, innovation has become a key business deliverable.

Information and communication technology continues to be the key expedient for innovation in business. Companies like Cisco have built and deployed innovative solutions across the world and thereby changed the dynamics of modern business. Anil Bhasin says, "Cisco is passionate about the success of our customers. We help our customers stay ahead on the innovation front and leverage lucrative business opportunities. Right from developing a network backbone for our telecom clients to helping our healthcare clients expand their market through telemedicine, we are determined to help our customers and our society innovate and grow."

Efficient employees and delighted customers

Rendering services is a personalized business with tremendous human involvement. Think about your favorite restaurant, trusted hospital, reliable mobile operator, nearest bank etc. and you would realize that a significant part of what you experience is dependent upon the people working in these organizations and are the fortunes of these businesses. Therefore it is critical for service-oriented businesses to continuously strive for higher employee efficiency. ICT solutions from Cisco are helping its customers do just that.

Collaboration solutions from Cisco are helping its customers not only improve the productivity of their staff, but also reduce costs by giving them a virtual platform to train and develop their manpower. Anil Bhasin says, "High employee productivity levels are the key to success for any service enterprise. Cisco's Borderless Network architecture and Collaboration solutions have helped our clients integrate their large workforce into a cohesive unit. Today the employees of our clients collaborate seamlessly to serve their customers more efficiently, irrespective of their location, device in use and operational time zone."

Risk mitigation and regulatory compliance

Compliance to regulatory guidelines is imperative for service organizations like banks, telecom operators and stock exchanges. Non-compliance can expose these corporates to significant business risk and sabotage their future growth prospects. Information and communication technology is helping corporates around the world mitigate this risk by streamlining key business processes and establishing critical checks and controls. Cisco works with some of the biggest banks in the world and its products are helping these banks offer a secure banking platform to their customer alongside opening up new channels like, mobile banking etc.

Choosing the right technology partner

While the role of ICT in managing business dynamics for service organizations

Anil Bhasin, Sr. Vice President, Services, Cisco, India and SAARC, shares his views on the role of ICT in service sector.

How does Cisco look at the services industry at large? What specific solutions do you have to offer to Service Sector customers?

Services is an integral part of the Cisco's growth strategy around the world and is one of Cisco's Top 5 Company Priorities. We firmly believe that whether it is hard core service sector organization like a bank or a product manufacturer, effective service delivery is the key to customer satisfaction and experience. With the network at the heart of every business, Services are critical in helping customers realize the full value of their IT and communications investments faster by harnessing the intelligent network as a powerful business platform. Simply put, our services help organizations enable architectures, a high-performing network, and business solutions.

Either delivered directly by Cisco and/or via partners worldwide, Cisco offers a broad range of service capabilities to help customers plan, build and run Cisco networks and solutions across all segments: Enterprise, Services Provider, Public Sector and Small Medium Business. Our entire portfolio is underpinned by Cisco Smart Service capabilities that fuel to fuel performance, efficiency, and innovation. Many companies are probably unaware, but our services portfolio also includes professional services and consulting where we help customers map our technology solutions to their business imperatives to demonstrate a high ROI.

India with its huge market potential is an attractive and strategic market for us. Today, most enterprises and government organizations manage their IT network on a reactive basis, responding to problems when they arise. To avoid network outages, these firms build redundancies in their IT infrastructure and also dedicate staff to monitor network performance in order to respond quickly to an outage. Firms may therefore have limitations on revenue-generating or cost-saving initiatives that are dependent on highly reliable networks. In order to help overcome these challenges for our customers, Cisco has launched "Smart Services" – a unique services capability that offers customers the actionable insight they need to proactively address potential issues, simplify and automate ongoing operations, and evolve their network to meet business objectives.

What makes Cisco different vis-à-vis its peers?

I think it is our overall consultative approach to solving our customers' business problems through our services capabilities that provide services solutions and coupled with world class technology is what makes us unique in this market place. In services, our vision is to "Help Solve the Toughest challenges in Business and Society with architectural solutions enabled by the network as the platform".

Cisco's unique Smart services improve operational efficiency, deliver predictable performance, and simplifies an increasingly complex network and IT infrastructure together with our

is apparent, choosing the right ICT partner is equally critical. Only few companies like Cisco bring the right ingredients to the table. Cisco will help you realize the full value of your network, IT, and communications investments faster and successfully harness the intelligent network as a powerful business platform.

Anil Bhasin, says "Whether you are



Anil Bhasin,
Sr. Vice President, Services,
Cisco, India and SAARC

partners. These software-enabled services automate the analysis of diagnostic data on the network and correlate it with Cisco's deep knowledge base. They provide greater visibility and predictive, actionable insight into customer's environment that enables them to simplify and automate ongoing operations and support business continuity. Simply put, customers benefit from Cisco's 25 years of industry experience with more than 50 million installed devices and 6 million annual customer interactions. So in a nutshell, Smart Services enable better visibility, better information, and better understanding to fuel performance, efficiency, and innovation for our customers.

How do you see the future unfolding with respect to ICT solutions impacting the service industry especially sun rise sectors like media and communications?

In this age of many clouds, BYOD and Big Data, "network as a platform" has become more relevant to businesses and governments than ever before - especially in India, where customers looking for leap-frog innovation and global competitiveness. A reliable and scalable network is the key differentiator for companies to provide exceptional customer experience, ensure security and compliance and to be ahead of the game with time to market innovations. Given the demanding business environment, aligning the network to achieve business objectives and the ability for it to support new solutions is becoming critical. In other words, we need to align technology investments with our customer's business strategy. The network therefore becomes inherent glue connecting their business architectures to technology architectures.

All of this means that Cisco is in a unique position to help its customers realize the full value of their network and IT investments faster through a Lifecycle approach delivering Smart Services capabilities which include Plan, Build and Manage.

We believe that Video is the next voice and with its rich media and pervasive characteristics will re-define interactions for B2B and B2C applications. Cisco is extending its already established leadership in this domain. With our dedicated R&D facilities in Bangalore, we look at making India as the intellectual hub for our world-class Video related solutions in the very near future.

looking to evolve your network to support business continuity and growth, increase operational efficiency, reduce costs, enable a more reliable customer experience, or mitigate risk, we have a service that can help you. Cisco Services uniquely deliver innovative solutions, unmatched expertise, and Smart Services capabilities using a collaborative partner approach."

CASE STUDY

Brief background

Bharti Airtel Limited is amongst the Top 5 Global integrated telecom services providers with operations in 20 countries across Asia and Africa. Jagbir Singh, the man at the helm of Networks in Airtel, responsible for building and managing the tremendous scale of Airtel's network in India and South Asia, faced the challenge of building a scalable and robust network to offer consistent and seamless experience for Airtel's customers while containing costs to keep it affordable.

Managing scale efficiently

As per the recently published results, mobile data traffic in India went up by 54 percent in first half of 2012. With more than 100 million internet users as of today, the growth of data consumption is going to be exponential both in terms of no. of users and usage per customer. The way smartphone adaption, data usage and App adaption trends are moving, it seems very soon even 3G speeds are not going to be enough, especially for early adaptors of technology in metro cities.

In the new Data centric world, Airtel continues with its legacy of superior service by ensuring efficiency, scalability, reliability and flexibility of the network deployed. Staying ahead of its competition by rolling out new offerings like 3G and 4G while maintaining its superior service levels is Airtel's constant endeavour.

Jagbir Singh, Director, Network Services Group, Airtel says, "Given our global presence and comprehensive service portfolio, we were looking to develop a strong converged network backbone infrastructure that could carry any type of data viz. voice, video, HD Content, Gaming & data heavy applications across all our markets." Such a strong network at the backend gives Airtel a definitive edge with respect to being ahead on the new offerings while ensuring seamless performance.

Choosing the right technology partners

Deployment of such a comprehensive and complex architecture demands expertise, strategy precision and dependable technology partners. Prospective partners are evaluated on attributes like global standards compliance & interoperability, proven reliability, commitment to



Jagbir Singh,
Director, Network Services Group, Airtel

Indian markets, end to end network management with ability for customer centric view, high scalability, reduced TCO, and green operations. In the networking arena, strong partner eco-system with system integration skills is also of paramount importance.

Airtel chose Cisco as one of its technology partners given its strong global and local presence apart from the globally acknowledged IP leadership that Cisco brings to the table. Also Cisco's growing focus in the services arena has helped Airtel maintain high quality of networks and ensure end customer satisfaction by constantly delivering high service levels. Cisco today is a major technology partner for Airtel's MPLS core backbone network that is capable of carrying huge amount of data.

The results

The MPLS network backbone has helped to provide seamless user experience and wide network coverage across geographically dispersed markets. It has also enabled the company to remain at the forefront of offering new services like high speed 4G, speed up-gradation up to 40 Mbps for broadband users and superior user experience on existing 2G and 3G networks.

With the MPLS network backbone, Airtel has been able to service its expanding customer base with greater efficiency without compromising on the speed of its scale-up. More importantly, assuring high quality, service continuity and high availability of such complex network is of paramount importance and requires rich intellectual capital, skilled people and tools.