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new beginning

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In India, digital transformation is at a tipping point, as leaders across the industry spectrum try to reinvent themselves using digital technologies and show the way ahead for Indian channel partners

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2019: THE YEAR OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERS



Nivedan Prakash
nivedan.prakash@expressindia.com

As we bid goodbye to 2018 and ring in the New Year with much fervour, it's time to see what's in store for the Indian channel community in 2019.

But before we get into the growth areas for the partners, it is really important to understand the business opportunities the Indian enterprises are creating for the channel partners. For example, Mahindra & Mahindra has launched an on-demand tractor service; ICICI Bank has introduced an instant digital credit offering with Paytm; HDFC Bank has created milk ATMs for milk producers; ICICI Lombard has replaced manual inception with AI-based processing, enabling immediate approval and policy issuance.

While these are just a few examples of digital transformation journeys, there are many more such stories in the market that has and would create more opportunities for partner firms who are reinventing themselves in the digital era. Furthermore, these use cases clearly show that apart from traditional areas, the solution partners can also build solutions for unexplored, but big markets.

Having said that, it's really heartening to see the readiness

of the channel partners who are betting big on digital technologies to accelerate their business growth for 2019 and beyond. The way organisations are relooking at their business and IT consumption model, partners offering services around cloud will play a very critical role. Even the 'cloudification of storage', wherein the enterprises are utilising storage based on the purpose/requirements, will help the partners understand the customers better and deliver the best.

With the adoption of AI, IoT, and ML gradually picking up, the solution partners need to focus on providing end-to-end solutions to address the business problems. Besides, Augmented Analytics, gamification, and RPA are the few emerging tech areas that partners must closely look at to create a niche for themselves.

Looking at the transformational stories of the leading Indian enterprises, the solution partners must not only realign their go to market strategies but also upskill and reskill themselves to tap the opportunities lying out there. It's also important for channel partners to learn from business models of different companies and tweak their solution offerings accordingly.

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Tech up the new beginning

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LESSONS FROM DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION LEADERS

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■ **Srikanth RP**

Last year, Bain & Company researched close to thousand companies across the world to gauge their digital readiness, and the associated impact. The analysis of the research revealed two critical points: While the payoff was substantially high for some firms, the success rate was

extremely low for a majority of the firms surveyed. In the survey, only five per cent of the companies involved in digital transformation reported that they had achieved the expectations set for themselves; while 20 per cent of the respondents said that the initiatives failed to deliver, producing less

than 50 per cent of the expected results. The analysis also showed that digital leaders outperformed their peers by a huge margin, and revenues for digital leaders grew more than twice as fast as digital laggards. The gap between the leaders and the laggards is the real opportunity for partner firms, who are reinventing themselves for the digital era.

Take an opportunity such as storage. Traditionally, it has been believed that storage is a shrinking business for partners in the cloud era. However, if partners reposition themselves, then they have a bigger

opportunity in the hybrid cloud era, as more enterprises look at partners who can help them transition their data seamlessly from the private cloud to public cloud or vice versa.

But the real game changer for Indian channel partners would come from transforming the business models of companies using digital technologies. Hence, it's important for channel partners to learn from business models of different companies and tweak their solution offerings accordingly. For example, Mahindra & Mahindra, has learned from Uber to launch an on demand tractor service. Similarly, ICICI

Bank has launched an instant digital credit offering with Paytm. It is also equally important to build solutions for unexplored, but big markets. For example, HDFC Bank has created milk ATMs for milk producers while ICICI Bank has co-created a technology solution with the Gurugram Municipal Corporation.

At CRN, we are fortunate to witness some of the most successful digital initiatives, and are presenting below some examples of digital leaders that have leveraged digital technologies extremely well to boost their competitiveness.

Mahindra & Mahindra

In this age of digital disruption, the group is tinkering with emerging technologies, as an early start can be a massive competitive advantage. For instance, it was one of the first conglomerates to experiment with blockchain. The Mahindra & Mahindra Group collaborated with IBM to consider the potential of using blockchain in supply chain finance. This was a pioneering initiative, as this was one of the first blockchain-based supply chain finance solution in an industry other than banking.

Being a large conglomerate, the group understands the need of creating new business models using the power of technology. VS Parthasarathy, Group CIO & CFO, Mahindra & Mahindra, echoes the thoughts of his group when he says, "In this age of digital disruption, experiential commerce will change how the customer experiences commerce, which in turn, will have an impact on business models. Organisations have to think on how they can help customers experience the 'wow' factor. I want all of our industries to be trendsetters in the digital world. My vision is that all our 21 industries will be digital world leaders in their own ways, and IT will be our partner in this."

Parthasarathy says that organisations need to rethink on how their business models must change.



VS Parthasarathy,
Group CIO & CFO,
Mahindra & Mahindra

"The new world will be B2C – it will not be a world built to last, but it will be a world built to change. Your old cost structure will have no place in the new world, so you have to reset and reboot your costs. Every organisation should continue to dramatically think how do we enable business, enhance it, and engender. Seventy per cent of the focus today is on enabling business and 30 per cent on enhancing and engendering, but in the new world, it should be vice versa. In order to be a value creator, organisations will have to commercialise business models of IT in terms of products and solutions,

look at the customer as the king and focus on creating immersive digital experiences for them."

One of the best examples that explains the group's thinking is the SYOUV platform which has been designed to help a customer who is currently in the pre-purchase phase. It provides a collection of important information regarding a Mahindra vehicle. It also offers personalised recommendations based on the customer's actions on the platform. A feature named 'Talk to Expert' allows customers to get answers to their queries in real-time through audio/text chat. The '3D Discovery'

shows various features of a Mahindra vehicle in a rich 3D format. There is also a 'Collaborative Exploration' feature on offer, through which, users can invite their friends from Facebook and email to collectively customise Mahindra vehicles. More recently, to help probable customers have a better experience of its e20 Plus electric car, the group is providing virtual reality devices at select dealership outlets to highlight key features of the car.

Predictive remote maintenance

In the enterprise segment, the notion of predictive maintenance using IoT is well known. Mahindra & Mahindra has used IoT intelligently to bring in a new level of experience for vehicle owners. The group launched 'DiGiSENSE', a platform that connects Mahindra vehicles, tractors, trucks and construction equipment to the cloud, opening up a whole new dimension to the experience of vehicle ownership. This launch made the company the first OEM in India to integrate its product line-up onto a cloud-based technology platform.

This platform enables owners, fleet operators, drivers, dealers and service teams to access vital information about their vehicles, trucks, tractors or construction equipment on a real-time basis from any location.

"With 'DigiSense', it will be the first time in India, that we will be able to do servicing, sales and solutions – all digitally – across our portfolio," states Parthasarathy.

Similarly, drivers can contact emergency breakdown services or pull up a route planner at the touch of a button, fleet owners and dealers can track the location of their vehicles in real-time, while remote diagnostics and reports allow service teams to monitor the vehicle's health and productivity parameters, on a real-time basis.

Taking a cue from Uber and Ola, the group has launched an online platform, SmartShift, that connects cargo owners and transporters. The technology provided by a company incubated by Mahindra & Mahindra, aggregates demand and helps cargo owners find the right transporter or logistics provider based on specific

parameters such as weight and shipment size. This has become extremely popular as transparent and competitive pricing is visible to both cargo owners and transporters. It is also possible to track and trace vehicles to ensure safety of cargo.

Tweaking the Uber model, Mahindra has launched agricultural equipment rental services. Using an app (Trinngo), farmers can rent tractors and equipment on a pay-per-use basis. Orders can be booked using an app, which are then passed on to the nearest franchisee using location based mapping.

Another innovative app called the 'With You Hamesha app' enables customers to check their car's service history, book a service slot and even create a job card to get an online service estimate. It also allows users to track servicing of their vehicles and establish a video connection with a relationship manager to get real-time updates. Customers can also opt to pay the service bill online through the app and can request the vehicle to be delivered to a specific address.

HDFC Bank

As a company, HDFC Bank has an asset quality that is unmatched by its peers. Unlike some of its peers, it has no stress on its portfolio, has a huge distribution network that is spread across the length and breadth of the country, and keeps on commanding healthy margins. No wonder, the bank's share commands a premium, as it has consistently lived up to the expectations of its investors for a long time.

One of the major reasons for the bank's continued success is the sustained investment in technology, which allows it to significantly automate some of its major processes. And every investment in technology is done from a point of view of scale.

Automate everywhere

HDFC Bank's approach to

Munish Mittal,
CIO, HDFC Bank

automation has been to automate every process where technology can improve efficiency with minimal human intervention. One of the best

examples of this approach can be seen in the personal loan segment. The bank uses an algorithm that allows it to process loans in just 10

seconds. The response on the first day was so huge that the bank ended up disbursing personal loans of an average size of `3 lakh a minute. The reason why HDFC Bank can do it so effortlessly, is because, unlike a traditional process where a bank's staff researches and reviews a borrower's credit history, HDFC Bank's algorithm consistently scans the cash flow patterns of the borrower and matches it with the credit score of the borrower. Using analytics, the bank then automatically enables processing of personal loans. When a customer clicks an offer, the details are pre-populated by the bank in the application form, and the application holder gets a sanction within 10 seconds of filling the form. Explains Munish Mittal, CIO, HDFC Bank, "Digital not only provides speed but also customer convenience and operational efficiency."

In line with this thinking, the bank has launched a slew of products such as PayZapp, SmartBUY or the Digital Loan Against Securities. HDFC Bank is the first bank in India to completely automate the entire process of creating an overdraft facility in a separate current account for loan against shares. The bank has collaborated with NSDL to create a seamless customer experience. HDFC Bank Demat Customers can calculate their eligibility for overdraft limit against shares, and open a current account instantly. The entire process can now be completed in under three minutes, instead of days. This offering empowers the customers to design their own loan against shares at their convenience and avail of the facility within minutes. Customers with shares in their portfolio can leverage it when there is an urgent need for money. Similarly, PayZapp and SmartBuy offer the advantage of one-click payments wherein the customer only needs a single click to perform tasks such as recharging their mobiles, paying a friend or pay utility bills without having to share card details.

Understanding customer behaviour

and using it to improve market leadership is a strategy that HDFC Bank has used perfectly. For example, a clever innovation called 'Missed Call Mobile Recharge' allows the bank to tap into an estimated 900 million prepaid mobile customers. This is a simple, but extremely effective way to recharge existing prepaid mobile connections. HDFC Bank customers can recharge their mobile by just giving a missed call on a predefined number, without the need to visit a shop, log onto a website or open an app. Further, customers can also add his family or friends to avail of the missed call mobile recharge service. To use this facility, there is no need for a data plan, which makes it useful for smaller towns and cities and in rural areas, where internet connectivity is not reliable.

Similarly, if a customer walks in an auto dealership, they can walk out with the vehicle on the same day itself. This can be done as the bank has the capability to disburse an auto loan within just 30 minutes using biometrics. A person has to just provide his Aadhaar card number and fingerprint. If a customer is found eligible, the loan is approved on the spot with minimal documentation.

Another product, PayZapp, has been created to solve the problem of high dropouts on mobile payments. PayZapp is an online payment solution, which has a feature called SmartBuy. This is a virtual mega marketplace that has every type of product available, from those that fulfill daily requirements. This features deals and offers by prominent e-commerce portals. The most significant advantage with PayZapp is that customers don't need to put in their debit card numbers or their security codes with every purchase. Payments can be authorised using a single PIN.

HDFC Bank was a pioneer in sending an SMS when a payment transaction happened. Today, as new digital mediums have evolved, the bank is experimenting with new technologies to ensure safety of

transactions. For example, the bank, in a pilot with NPCI, is experimenting with location-based tracking for matching a customer's phone location with the location of the ATM where the customer's debit card is used for a transaction. If the customer's phone is found far away from the physical location of the ATM, then the system can reject the transaction, as the assumption is that a customer normally has his mobile phone with him or her. If a customer agrees, then the same technology can also be used for cross-selling opportunities (such as prompting a customer with an offer from a nearby restaurant, based on the location).

To ensure proper due diligence, the bank has created a contact point verification app. Explains Mittal, "When our field officer visits a customer for contact point verification, we now geotag and geo code and update the required information then and there on the mobile app. For example, in the case of a personal or an auto loan where the relationship is new, we visit the customer's location to establish that the customer lives at the point specified in his or her application. To improve our efficiencies, we created a Contact Point Verification (CPV) app. This has helped improve our approval rates internally. So, when we say, we will grow a little better than the market, it is a culmination of all such efforts from a technology perspective."

Ideas for Bharat

It is said that India lives in its villages, and HDFC Bank has not lost sight of the immense potential of the growth in rural and semi-urban areas. The bank already has close to 55 per cent of its branches in semi-urban and rural areas, and the bank extensively uses technology to deliver agricultural loans within three to four working days in certain geographies. The bank has deployed over 300 micro ATMs in rural areas and over 2000 devices in the rural branches for eKYC. Additionally, an eligible farmer can avail of an enhancement to a loan in a

few seconds using ATMs or mobile phones.

Another big success story is the digitisation of milk cooperatives. The bank has digitised payments at over 1,200 milk cooperatives across the nation. The move is part of the bank's Milk to Money (M2M) programme, benefiting 3.2 lakh dairy farmers in 16 states. The programme aims to bring dairy farmers into the organised banking system by digitising the supply chain, with specific and customised products targeted at satisfying their banking and financial needs. The M2M ATMs at large collection centers are equipped with cash dispensers, while smaller collection points have business correspondents who operate micro ATMs allowing dairy farmers to

withdraw cash from their accounts. A credit history is also generated which helps farmers take out loans or avail other banking products.

Today, the bank is looking at digitising every process. It has also been smart enough to tie up with startups through focused initiatives. The bank has launched a Digital Innovation Summit and invited Fintech startups to showcase their technology solutions. It's a win-win for both the bank and the startup community. The bank gets access to some of the best disruptive technologies in the market and for the startups, they get access to commercialise and promote their innovations. One successful example is the partnership that the bank has with AI startup, Niki.ai. The bank

launched its AI based chatbot – OnChat – on Facebook Messenger in 2016, and within one year of its launch, the chatbot, created in partnership with Niki.ai, had marked 160 per cent month-on-month growth in transactions.

Similarly, HDFC Bank's virtual chatbot 'Eva' has answered more than five million queries from around a million customers with more than 85 per cent accuracy. Eva holds more than 20,000 conversations everyday with customers from across the world.

HDFC Bank has been extremely successful because the bank has been looking to play its digital game on a better and bigger scale, and with an execution that is backed with a digital culture with the active support of a CEO.

Purvankara



Ashish Puravankara,
MD, Puravankara

With the government's push for Digital India, the country has seen a widespread uptake of automation across a number of sectors, even those that are traditionally not technology-driven. A prime example of this is Purvankara's integration of robotics in the field of real estate. In a recent initiative, the company made use of robots as the first customer touch point, as part of their larger business strategy of integrating

technology into the Customer Relation Management process.

Says Ashish Puravankara, MD, Puravankara, "The two humanoids – Mitra and Mitri – which we recently introduced at one of our flagship home exhibitions, Bengaluru Home Habba, were the first touch points for all visitors coming to the fest and handling visitor management system. The biggest advantage we had was seamless, accurate customer data

accumulation in almost 10 times lesser time in comparison to any conventional method. In the regular format, the same thing would have taken close to 100 hours which is now reduced to just approximately seven to eight hours."

The bots are the first customer touchpoint for data acquiring, storing and analytics, using voice and touch panel enabled data capturing. When a customer interacts with the robotic interface, data is moved into the Customer Relation Management (CRM) system, Sales Force, and thereby creating direct, correct and more importantly, insightful data. This in turn will translate into a more relevant and faster turnaround of customer enquiries and improved customer engagement with deeper customer insight. The focus was on providing give uniform experience to each of visitor with accumulation of correct data along with real-time integration to the central (customer) database. Introduction of bots has helped the firm in achieving this objective to a great extent. In a three-day expo in Bengaluru, the group received close to 1,500 unique visitors (walk-ins) and closed more than 100 sales bookings.

ICICI Lombard

ICICI Lombard has replaced manual inception with AI-based processing, enabling immediate approval and policy issuance. The feature is the industry's first AI based solution to facilitate the instant renewal of expired or lapsed motor insurance policies.

The AI-powered feature will allow the user to capture images of his car and upload it using ICICI Lombard's insure mobile application. The images will be further analysed by the cloud-hosted AI module to detect the presence of any damage, post which the break in policy proposal will be either accepted or recommended for verification.

"Expired motor insurance policies is an area of concern, as we have 14,000-15,000 monthly inspection being handled. And the lapsed insurance leads to delay in the new policy



Amitabh Jain,

Head, Motor & Health Underwriting & Claims, ICICI Lombard

issuance and inertia in renewals. The conventional way would take at least two day for renewal," says Amitabh

Jain, Head, Motor & Health Underwriting & Claims at ICICI Lombard.

Digit General Insurance

Inurance has been a difficult world to crack, not only in terms of understanding the insurance policies, but also to sell; however, the use of digital is bringing about an upheaval. It's powering the new age digital insurance firms to ramp up businesses with enhanced customer experience. One such firm is Digit General Insurance (DGI). The company has scored impressive numbers in just a span of one year by acquiring 1 million customers; clocking ₹350 crore premium. Kamesh Goyal, Founder & Chairman, Digit Insurance says his mission is to make insurance simple and use technology to automate and fasten processes and resolve customer pain points.

DGI, by using the power of digital, wants to simplify insurance products and services. A case in point is the process of break-in insurance, where the policy has lapsed and the policy holder wants to renew it. The conventional way used to take days in the process of the customer informing



Gangadhar S J,

Head, Technology, Digit General Insurance

the company about the policy lapse, followed by the surveyor visiting the customer and taking the photographs of the vehicle, updating the records and subsequently, a decision is taken on whether the policy should be renewed or not.

Fast forward it to today, DGI has

collapsed this process into a self service mode. The policy holder is being sent a link to the app through SMS, which allows him to take photographs of the vehicle. The app works on an assisted mode with the policy holder on the specific angles in which the vehicle should be

photographed. The underwriter immediately takes a decision on the basis of the condition of the vehicle and decides whether the policy does qualify for a renewal or not. This is one of the examples of how digital is changing the way insurance is done.

The company also offers domestic flight delay insurance. In the business mix, the travel insurance contributes 39 per cent, which is the biggest LoB

for DGI. The claims process is automated and simplified; e.g. in case, the flight gets delayed by 60 minutes, DGI informs the customer proactively. "Usually, the customer forgets that he has bought an insurance policy. Hundred per cent of flight delay claims are automatic, the person getting an SMS to send his boarding pass and bank details as soon as the flight is delayed beyond

the given time. We also have partnerships with various players to monitor the domestic flights. The analytics runs at the backend, tracking how many customers who have bought policy from us and are travelling in the same flight," explains Gangadhar S J, Head, Technology, DGI. The systems are developed inhouse and they are programmed to track the flights in real-time.

ICICI Bank

Technology has been in the DNA of ICICI bank since its inception. Be it one of the first banks to offer ATMs or banking using social media, ICICI Bank has been a pioneer in identifying market trends much more earlier than its competitors. Today, the market has completely changed, with born-in-the-cloud startups competing with traditional banks.

The first impact of digital has been on the payments business – from cash to cards, to mobile payments. Anything that can be converted from physical mechanism to a completely digital mechanism is digital transformation. The way employees interact with the systems is different, the same is the case with how employees interact with customers.

"This digital transformation is forcing us to do a lot of rethinking on three bases. Our existing business is very critical; for incumbents like us, the traditional business model is important. Within our existing businesses, we are making the processes much more efficient. This includes things like robotic process automation, covering 950 processes," states B Madhivanan, CTDO, ICICI Bank. Another important element has been the ability to service customers, both existing and new. In terms of existing customers, it's about cross-selling; whereas, it's about creating bases in terms of new customers. For instance, providing tablets to the front-end for the sales teams or digital forms for SMB retail customers.

B Madhivanan,
CTDO, ICICI Bank



Reimagining banking

On the digital front, the bank's efforts include a different approach on how processes are viewed end-to-end and how decisions are taken; alongside high level RPA. On the transformation side, the bank wants to steer businesses in a completely different way. "Our Executive Director and MD are driving the agenda of direct-to-consumer (D2C). Until now the model has been intermediary in nature – it could be an employee, or a channel partner. Now as the world is becoming bigger and more connected, it's creating an ability for us to reach out directly to customers – which is crucial for us," explains Madhivanan. Whether customers do banking through retail, internet banking, or mobile, it contributes to the digital story.

Transformation for the bank is about virtually recreating a model wherein customers come directly without any intermediary.

Additionally, a thought process is underway in completely reimagining the bank and the services offered. "We are thinking if there is a way to reimagine the most often used banking services, from a mobile perspective – such as payments, lending, trade, financial management, buying policies, investing. Our iMobile app, for example, acts as a channel on one hand; we have about 180 services on mobile currently. We are also trying to reimagine if we can do things that we have never thought of, on iMobile," says Madhivanan.

There are various products on the sidelines of current and savings

accounts, wherein the bank is trying to reimagine the experience and context. The price points of insurance are high because it is being delivered by a physical mechanism. If the same insurance product is offered on a mobile app, there is a possibility of creating customised products at a cost that would have never been possible in a branch scenario. The impact of this is not just on cost-to-income, but there is a new segment of revenue. For instance, a policy can be sold over a phone, which is not possible in physical bank branches. This is making the entire context more relevant – it is a unique combination of driving consumer journeys.

Run, Transform and Reimagine are the three areas being worked upon. The first two will primarily focus on cost-to-income; whereas

reimagination will create completely new business segments. This is being made possible through a three-way process. Transformation is a combination of the technology and the innovation teams. Whereas, the reimagination part is a combination of new age technologies such as retail internet banking, corporate internet banking, iMobile, etc.

Creating instant consumption models

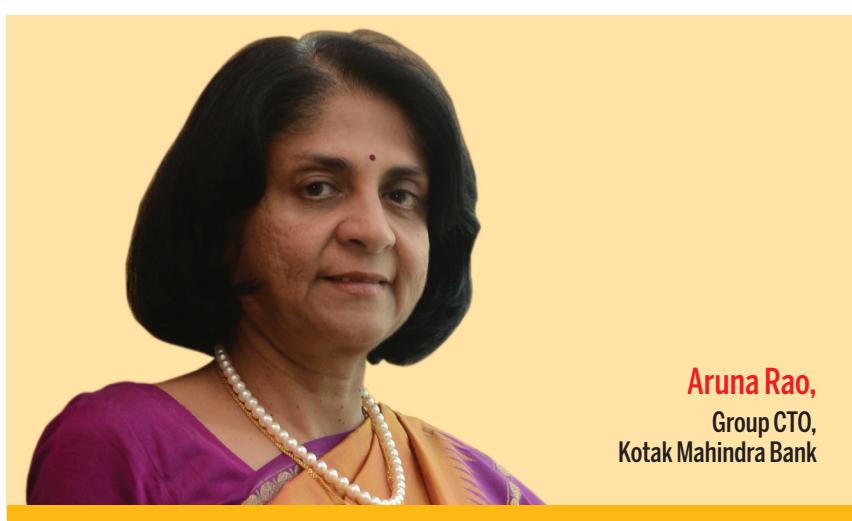
This is an era of instant consumption, and the bank realises the strategic importance of creating products that can be consumed immediately. Backed by powerful analytics, the bank has created several instant products – instant credit card, instant PPF facility, instant digital credit. Several of these products are unique. For example, the

bank has tied up with Paytm to jointly launch 'Paytm-ICICI Bank Postpaid', a digital credit account with instant activation: with no hassles of documentation or branch visit, while activation is fully online. This enables lakhs of new-to-credit customers to get instant digital credit for shopping. This is based on a new Big Data based algorithm by ICICI Bank for real-time credit assessment of customers. The algorithm uses an intelligent combination of financial and digital behaviour of the customer including credit bureau check, purchase patterns, frequency of purchase to ascertain the credit – worthiness of a customer within a few seconds. Based on the credit-score of the customer, the bank offers upto 45 days interest-free credit limit.

Kotak Mahindra Bank

It is a sign of Kotak Mahindra Bank's digital strengths that is helping the bank deliver stellar results. Today, a significant percentage of recurring deposits for the bank is sourced digitally, and mobile banking transactions are at an all-time high. For Kotak Mahindra Bank, the launch of 811, India's first downloadable digital banking ecosystem with biometric-led KYC verification, has resulted in a paperless, real-time banking experience for customers, reducing the turnaround time for opening a bank account from a few days to a few minutes, reducing the cost of customer acquisition and increasing the productivity of the field force.

The name '811' is derived from the date when demonetisation was announced – November 8. Born out of the Government of India's vision of a Digital New India, 811 has been designed around the idea of simplicity and ease of use. It offers a completely digital and paperless account opening experience. It can be opened anywhere, anytime, within five minutes.



Aruna Rao,
Group CTO,
Kotak Mahindra Bank

811 offers a zero-balance digital bank account with zero charges for all digital transactions, where customers can earn up to six per cent interest per annum on their savings account balances. 811 has been embraced by Indians across the country and demonstrates the readiness of Indian customers to adopt digital banking.

Aruna Rao, Group CTO, Kotak Mahindra Bank, says, "The 811 facility

is a unique story. It's a truly born-in-the-cloud product. It was not just replicated out of an offering in the physical world. 811 was never existing in the branches. It was born as a digital solution, designed domain experts in business, technology and regulation thinking together. This is because the product couldn't have been ideated without all the pieces coming together."

Hero MotoCorp

One of the most well known brand names in India, Hero MotoCorp has taken a number of innovative digital initiatives that have become the benchmark for other firms. For instance, the firm started the 'Digital Twin' project to create a digital replica of its Halol manufacturing facility. This was done so that a reference model could be created for commissioning of all new factories and manufacturing facilities could be done before actual production begins.

Vijay Sethi, CIO, Hero MotoCorp, explains, "We have set up a factory in Halol using the 'Digital Twin' technology concept. The entire factory was simulated, as to how would it look after it is ready for operations. This is the first time a factory has been built in India using



Vijay Sethi,
CIO, Hero MotoCorp

the digital twin technology. Thus we were able to avoid any layout, process related changes that might have been done afterwards. As a

consequence, the cost incurred, time taken was reduced in a big way. The rework level was slashed to a significant level."

Blue Star

Blue Star designs, manufactures, sells, commissions and services room air conditioners, chillers, ducted units, water purifiers/coolers, air purifiers and refrigeration equipment. In order to provide a superlative customer service experience and also enhance service levels, Blue Star decided that the field service operation had to be transitioned into a technology-equipped field by using mobile devices in day-to-day operations. This would enable the field service team to be agile, better equipped, project a high-tech image to the customer, be in touch with the customer through the process, and ensure electronic capture of all required information which would then facilitate the usage of analytics.

The primary aim of the project was to design and deliver a scalable mobile-based service management platform that enables the company's field service personnel to manage,

assign, track and respond to service requests/ complaints through a mobile app and ensure authentic execution of all technical support services including installation, service requests and customer calls across a wide range of products. Service technicians, dealer technicians, dealers and employees associated with the field service operations were provided an Android-based mobile app and were transitioned from a paper-based operation to an electronic one.

The Android-based app, Blue Star's ServIT mobile app, equips authorised technicians of Blue Star's customer service operation to track, respond and service customer requests/ complaints. The app enables technicians to be up-to-date on their call requests and respond to customers in quick time.

The app captures the location coordinates i.e. latitude and longitude of the service technician when he/she

closes the call at the customer's premises. This feature was added to verify that the complaint or the service request was rightfully addressed at the time that it was closed. Thus, the app eliminates incorrect or forged call closures, if any.

The app is equipped with a bar code scanner that logs the customer's machine serial number among other important product-related information. This is the unique number by which the product's service history is tracked.

Customer reviews and ratings are among the most important parameters with which one can measure the quality of after sales service. The app ensures that the data thus captured is not forged by having the customer enter a unique One Time Password (OTP) which unlocks the feedback mechanism on the app along with a placeholder to have the customer's signature.



TECH UP THE NEW BEGINNING

In many ways, 2018 was a revolutionary year for the IT industry, and the trend is expected to continue in 2019 as well, with channel partners betting big on next generation technologies to drive their business growth

■ **Rachana Jha**

IT spending in India continues to be driven by digital business transformation initiatives from both private and public organisations. Both sectors have become adaptive to business model change and bring new practices, develop new capabilities and create new ways to succeed in the digital world, says a recent Gartner report. India's IT spending is projected to total US\$ 89.2 billion in 2019, an increase of 6.7 per cent from estimated spending of \$83.6 billion in 2018. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing, blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), augmented reality and virtual reality, RPA (Robotic Process Automation), DevOps, big data, Angular and React, Intelligent

Apps (I-Apps) have been some of the technologies which will continue to be at the forefront in 2019.

CRN India spoke to key industry experts to get their views on the major developments in 2018 and their perceptions for the year ahead.

Learnings from 2018

Varadharajan Krishnamoorthy, Director, CloudsDirect says, "Even though cloud computing has been there for over a decade, 2018 will be seen as the year when multi-cloud became a reality. For long, enterprises are talking about hybrid cloud. But, as more and more enterprises take a cloud-only or cloud-first approach, Amazon Web Services was fast gaining traction. Enterprises started realising the risks of using a single cloud provider and are now embracing multiple cloud providers like Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Alibaba, etc."

Rajesh Thadani, Sales Director, Crayon Software points out that if we observe the technology curve, we will realise that 2014 was the year when companies started exploring cloud. "But, obviously, everybody was not fully convinced as it involved a lot of skepticism. Companies were reluctant to use cloud because of various reasons. Firstly, it was in its nascent stage and secondly, they were not sure about its impact on the business. It took almost three years to mature. By 2017, the cloud was no more a buzzword— people started heading towards cloud in terms of POCs (proof of concepts). They started looking into how secure it is and how it can be utilised to unleash the potential benefits of cloud. And, 2018 was the year which gave it a major boost. To explain the power of cloud, we have multiple reports backing up the fact that over 75,000 billion mobile applications were developed last year and 70 per cent customers have already adopted cloud in some form or the other," adds Thadani.

While J Kesavardhanan, MD & CEO, K7 Computing, thinks that 2018 has been the year of illegal crypto mining malware for Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, he says, "We have



WE HAVE ALSO SEEN IN 2018 THAT BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY ITSELF IS LIMITED TO CERTAIN USE CASES. THOUGH THE SPREAD OF BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY IS LIKELY TO SLOW DOWN, IT REMAINS STRONG WHERE THE USE CASES REQUIRE IT

J Kesavardhanan,
MD & CEO,
K7 Computing

also seen in 2018 that blockchain technology itself is limited to certain use cases. Though the spread of blockchain technology is likely to slow down, it remains strong where the use cases require it; e.g. for irreversible, authenticated, documented financial transactions such as those used on cryptocurrency platforms." He believes that another key highlight of 2018 would be the revelation of the Spectre/Meltdown hardware vulnerabilities at the CPU level. The nature of potential attacks might have been hyped up a little bit, but the very possibility of such attacks would have set the alarm bells ringing for manufacturers of chips such as Intel, the creators of cloud platforms such as Google, Amazon, and Microsoft, and finally thousands of corporate entities using such cloud platforms, apart from their on-site servers.

Nazmeen Ansari, CEO, Matrix3D

Infocom, reveals that one of the major high points in her company is that they have leveraged their alliances and partners to create further opportunities which have translated into higher revenues. "It has been a year of partnerships. Also, the movement of clients wanting to work with us due to technical expertise instead of just costs, has encouraged us to invest more into skilled and qualified staff, thus creating a strong foundation and innovation," she adds.

According to KV Jagannath, MD & CEO, Choice Solutions, the high point for his company has been new product developments in areas of education and energy efficient IoT solutions. "These products and solutions are going to change the way customers are going to adapt, going forward. The lows have been traditional IT products and services like systems integration business. It has an impact on overall revenues as well as margins. Innovation is the key for success, going forward," mentions Jagannath.

For Harikrishna Prabhu, Director, Technobind Solutions, 2018 has been a good year as they recorded unprecedented growth. "In 2018, we entered the cloud and the data analytics market by signing up with Tableau. In terms of footprints, after cementing our position in eight major cities: Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Pune. Today we also have a presence in T2 markets, namely, Chandigarh, Kochi, Trivandrum, Coimbatore, Bhubaneswar, Raipur, etc. Besides, we have expanded the business in SAARC region as well," he states. The channel partner's base across the country has also increased to over 650. "Of them, we work really closely with 150 aligned partners. When I say aligned, it means we engage with them on a daily basis. We have already covered 85 per cent of enterprise partners and are looking forward to adding more," shares Prabhu.

Expectations from 2019

The year 2019 is going to be a critical one for business. Elections are going to be held soon which will

definitely have an impact on different industry segments, including the IT sector. "As 2019 is an election year, government business is going to be less. But, mid-market business will be healthy," says Ajay Sawant, Managing Director, Orient Technologies.

Punit Thakkar, Founder & CEO, Shivaami Cloud Services, believes that 2019 would herald in such economic reforms in our country that would bring in more profit for entrepreneurs. There will be a rise in the rate of the Rupees in the international market. "This is the year where we want to beat the target of our 1,000 days vision," he asserts.

Deepali Japadia, Head – Cloud Infrastructure & Telecom Business, Pentagon System and Services, feels that 2019 is going to be a year for those who are considering digital transformation as a catalyst for their business or have already started the journey. "There is going to be an exponential change in the way organisations are looking at their IT and business model. With more discussions on developing services around cloud, partners will also play a critical role," says Japadia.

IT trends in 2019

Industry experts are confident that the IT trends that will shape the industry in 2019, will have a long term impact. Sarika Malhotra, CEO, C3IT Software Solutions, lists the top three IT trends that will impact the industry:

- **The “platform-isation” of emerging technologies:** This implies the creation of blockchain-as-a-service, augmented analytics-as-a-service, AR-as-a-service, IoT-as-a-service, and AI-as-a-service
- **AI will impact development:** Gartner believes that by 2022, 40 per cent of new application development will involve AI co-developers. AI will augment autonomous vehicles, analytics and application development, among scores of other activities and platforms
- **Empowered edge:** The edge refers



COMPANIES WERE RELUCTANT TO USE THE CLOUD BECAUSE OF VARIOUS REASONS. FIRSTLY, IT WAS IN ITS NASCENT STAGE AND SECONDLY, THEY WERE NOT SURE ABOUT ITS IMPACT ON THE BUSINESS

Rajesh Thadani,
Sales Director,
Crayon Software

to endpoint devices used by people or embedded in the world around us. Currently, the edge is being driven by IoT and the need to keep processing close to the edge rather than on a centralised cloud server. In the future, cloud computing and edge computing will evolve as complementary models, with cloud services being managed as a centralised service.

Anuja Parikh, CEO, Intech Systems foresees merging of technologies like AI and IoT, Augmented Analytics – bringing actionable real-time insights to businesses, and channel will be more focused on providing end to end solutions for business problems. Design thinking will be adopted, and more new products will come out.

Thadani explains in detail, cloud computing trends in 2019:

- **Drive business with AI:** AI has

already paved its way in most of the industries. In the future, AI and big data will offer powerful tools to streamline business processes, get rid of legacy systems, simplify operations and expedite processes. AI will be the key enabler in innovating new products and understand the customers better to deliver the best. The future holds more disruption from AI, not less. IoT is not a new thing. Soon, there will be thousands of devices connected from one individual, generating an enormous amount of data. To leverage value out of that data, AI tools are needed

- **"Cloudification" of storage:** In 2019, companies will start utilising storage based on the purpose/requirements. We will witness that IaaS, storage, and databases will become intelligent and rule the market. Storage and the data it houses are the two main components of every business foundation. When we cloudify the storage, it gives us the freedom of data – a valuable asset — being available, accurate, reusable and secure
- **Mobility:** 2018 was a year for enterprise mobility, as organisations continued leveraging new mobile technologies to boost productivity and improve employee experience, reduce costs, and protect data. With 5G implementation around the corner, businesses should start ramping up their systems for this to make the most out of it.
- **Software-as-a-Service (SaaS):** In the upcoming year, with SaaS, we will witness more and more companies adopting SaaS as it helps in legacy application migration to the cloud. Most of the companies will be turning to cutting-edge SaaS powered tools. Their operations will no longer depend on legacy systems as most of the performance apps (70-80 per cent) will be hosted and maneuvered in the cloud. It will benefit the companies in terms of financial savings, productivity and

of course, it's easy to use.

- **Emerging technologies:** The top emerging technologies for partners are - blockchain, as it is becoming reality with many applications; IoT solutions and innovations; AI; and Autonomous Vehicle (AV) and related technology opportunities.

"The emerging technologies which directly impact the channel market are many, but there are some which will, in the long-term, change the way business is done. Business Intelligence is one such area. If the channel can understand, based on data, how the trends are moving, and partners who leverage this data to understand markets would be able to increase sales and also predict products and services consumption," mentions Ansari, adding that another area where the ease of doing business has created opportunities for new entrepreneurs makes the cost come down. The technology used for GST, logistics and the wider use of connected devices compounded with cloud technologies make the partner focus on sales rather than the back office.

Parikh points out that autonomous things, gamification, and data analytics are some major emerging technologies that partners would be looking at. While Japadia asserts, "We will see how companies are using ML and AI as it has shown immense potential. Though blockchain has not gained the speed as expected, certainly it is back and will be a key technology to look at."

Business plans to start the year with

Most channel partners have their business strategies in place for 2019. "We will be trying to scale bigger and focus on new areas like AI and big data in the healthcare sector," reveals Krishnamoorthy.

Highlighting their plans Kesavardhanan says, "We are constantly looking at innovating technologies. Our business focus is expanding towards providing security to the enterprise segment.



IT HAS BEEN A YEAR OF PARTNERSHIPS. THE MOVEMENT OF CLIENTS WANTING TO WORK WITH US DUE TO TECHNICAL EXPERTISE INSTEAD OF JUST COSTS, HAVE ENCOURAGED US TO INVEST MORE INTO SKILLED AND QUALIFIED STAFF

Nazmeen Ansari,
CEO,
Matrix3D Infocom

Since most SMEs in India do not have a separate IT infrastructure setup; K7 Computing is constantly working towards providing security solution to them. We have recently announced new products to address the security concerns of the enterprise segment and are persistently focusing to execute a new level of security convenience for our customers."

Kesavardhanan also believes that 2019 will see adaptation of cloud service as a big challenge. "India will migrate to a hybrid model cloud and on-premise model. All large enterprises have moved to IoT and are largely becoming dependent on AI and ML. There is a need to build awareness on the importance of security in this space. K7 Computing is looking beyond computing devices and is focusing on enhancing security for IoT and cloud services. We are working on a model wherein we can cover the existing technologies with

our security layers to monitor and provide alerts to the enterprises," he remarks.

Describing her plans, Malhotra says, "We will continue to pursue our long-term vision of offering our customers differentiated and innovative technologies that add value to their business, by helping them serve their customers and stakeholders in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. We plan to make two major investments in 2019. First, to mature our RPA offering into a Smart Process Automation (SPA), i.e. a complete bouquet with process automation, ML and AI solutions. Second, to establish AI-driven development, and build AI-based solutions using predefined models and algorithms."

She adds, "Among our existing practices, we will aggressively expand our data analytics business and offer industry-specific solutions. We recognise that data has a completely new dimension, with sources as diverse as LOB applications, connected devices, social media, and the ubiquitous spreadsheets. The key is to provide an integrated view to the business, incorporating all these sources. Historical analysis is passé – giving businesses the ability to employ predictive analytics using ML and cognitive services is the future. Furthermore, we look to specialise in line-of-business applications for retail, manufacturing and pharma verticals, while continuing to deliver services to large and mid-market enterprises."

Besides, some are also looking for the expansion of their business and increase in headcounts. For instance, Thakkar plans for a branch of Shivaami in the US by April 2019. He targets to acquire 20,000 customers by end of the year of 2019, from the current 9,000.

Prabhu has big investment plans for 2019. "We have started a Cloud and Analytics BU which is where we will focus on from an investment perspective as we believe that space is really going to expand," he reveals.

'MOST OF OUR GROWTH WILL BE FROM SOC SERVICES, AND SSL VISIBILITY'

Banking upon SOC based services, which have been instrumental in driving business growth, Symantec is further planning to capture a larger share in the security market. In an interaction with CRN India, **Gaurav Agarwal**, Managing Director – India & SAARC, Symantec, shares more details

By Nivedan Prakash

How has been Symantec's business in the Indian market; and how much is the company focusing on this market?

Blue Coat and Symantec have been functioning as one entity. Symantec used to be strong on the endpoint front, protecting loss of data through DLP, and working with most large banks, IT/ITeS companies, telecom companies.

Whereas, Blue Coat was strong on the web access area for large enterprises. In the last 18 months, the integration has happened extremely well and with the combined capabilities of both Symantec and Blue Coat, we have the largest threat intelligence platform in the world. From our customer's perspective, the advantage is that the sales person can showcase a large scale of offerings, unlike other security players who have point products.

Recently, we also re-energised our SOC from India capability point of view. We re-launched our SOC in Chennai in August 2018 and we've seen tremendous traction. In India, traditionally we were not focused on selling SOC services; we were predominantly selling products. However, in the last six to nine months, we have enhanced our portfolio



capability to sell SOC-based services. Overall, we're growing twice the growth rate of the market.

Which key areas have given you a competitive advantage; and how are you leveraging emerging technologies?

Symantec has been using AI and ML for more than 10 years now – it comes naturally for building great security products. For example, our SOCs analyse 150 billion logs everyday. Conversions of 150 billion logs to 60,000 events to work

on can only happen through the use of tools like AI and ML. Enterprises have numerous vendors, who speak different languages, have challenges and requirements. The biggest advantage that we have is the capability to replace point-products with a platform that can talk and understand every language. This ensures better integration and security postures. We have invested in a platform called 'Integrated Cyber Defense Exchange (ICDX)' which also integrates with other OEMs and partners in the industry, leading to better security.

Alongwith minor re-adjustments, we keep focusing on higher growth. When it comes to competition, we are watchful, but not worried because no other competitor has the scale, expertise and depth that we have.

How has been the market response to your SOC based services?

One of the high growth areas for us has been the SOC based services selling model in the last six to nine months. We are talking more and more about it with our customers and are seeing a lot of value. Large enterprises may have the tools, but not necessarily

the skills to use those tools. This is where we can step in. We can help customers respond during the attack and post attack. We are seeing a lot of traction in this space and our business is growing at a much faster pace than our product business. In this area, we are working with one of the largest automotive companies, IT/ITeS companies and some of the largest state government bodies in the country.

There has been an increase in security budgets. Do you see that the budgets are being spent in the right direction?

Boards of companies not only want to understand security at a business level, but also the risks and how they can prepare better. Even the challenges that CTOs and CIOs have been traditionally facing with budgeting are being addressed. Now the challenge lies in whether they are prioritising the budget in the right way – figuring out what is the value of what you seek to protect. Then comes the challenge of getting the best out of the investments. In many circumstances, customers don't have the right people, the right implementation, and the right skills to get the maximum out of the implementation.

In the past, you insisted on cohesive CCO and CIO collaboration. How will it work for the betterment of organisations and in turn, help you make inroads and offer your solutions?

A CCO ensures that the risk in the organisation is contained. Whereas, a CIO is responsible for choosing the tools that can contain that risk. Many times, the debate is about who has the right to choose the tools and whether the risk is big enough or not. Currently, I don't think this collaboration is happening. The CIO of an organisation has a lot more maturity in choosing the tools and dealing with OEM vendors than the CCO, as traditionally, the CCO takes a more risk-based approach. Similarly, the CCO has a more mature understanding of risks than the CIO. In this scenario, vendors like us make sure that both understand the lengths from

where they are coming, to ensure a cohesive decision-making process and outcome.

Between these two, where do you see the role of a Chief Digital Officer?

The initial role of a Chief Digital Officer was to help the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO). It was more of an external facing role which can help the organisation with digitising workflows, engage better with clients, suppliers and internal employees in the transition. The CDO also fits into the collaboration between the CCO and CIO to make sure that the digitisation journey is more user friendly and doesn't increase security risks.

In terms of industries, which one has an increased focus on security spendings?

The government has clearly increased its focus on security. With the recent infrastructure investments, we see many growth opportunities. Secondly, we see good potential in startups, especially businesses which are built around e-commerce and mobile commerce. The manufacturing sector has been a little slower than banking, ITeS, telecom, and others. However, we are introducing some new solutions which should help the manufacturing vertical pickup speed as well. Overall, the new trend of migration to cloud has been a big driver for us.

There are many deployments happening in the cloud domain. What are the challenges faced in this area and how is Symantec positioned to help customers protect their cloud environment?

With migration to cloud, organisations establish a channel or connectivity directly to cloud. Secondly, when you move data to cloud, you have to understand how to protect the data in cloud, how to get visibility into the applications used by employees. Symantec has a solution for all these As organisations move to cloud, they need to re-look at their security architecture, because the ownership of giving a safe cloud environment is with

the cloud provider, but protecting the data is your responsibility.

The government is building cyber capabilities and conducting R&D on new technologies that can be leveraged for future. How can Symantec help in R&D and intelligence?

We share threat intelligence whenever the government requests. Right now, our work with the government is more towards helping them become secure by offering products and services in terms of both, threat intelligence, threat response, managed security services, etc.

In the overall journey, how critical has been the role of your channel ecosystem?

We are a channel based company and more than 90 per cent of the business annually gets transacted through the channel. Our partners extensively help us through the PoC, supply, post sales, implementation and in terms of people. We have partners who have good relations with both companies, Symantec and Blue Coat. In the last 18 months, partners have been through the journey of expanding their capability and portfolio.

What will be the key thrust areas for 2019 and beyond?

In terms of markets, our penetration in the enterprise vertical is very good. The revenue enhancements will come from the journey to cloud and SSL visibility. Customers need investments because the digital journey will need SSL inspection to facilitate the change to cloud. These two technologies will drive our enterprise discussions and most of our enterprise accounts. Most of our growth will be from SOC services, and SSL visibility, helping customers move to cloud from a security perspective. Symantec has made some great enhancements on the endpoint and technologies in the last six to nine months. Symantec has also recently bought Javelin, which helps protect active directory. The MSME space is where we would depend on our partners such as Airtel.



Business Transformation Together



Date:
5th - 6th February 2019

Time:
10am to 7pm

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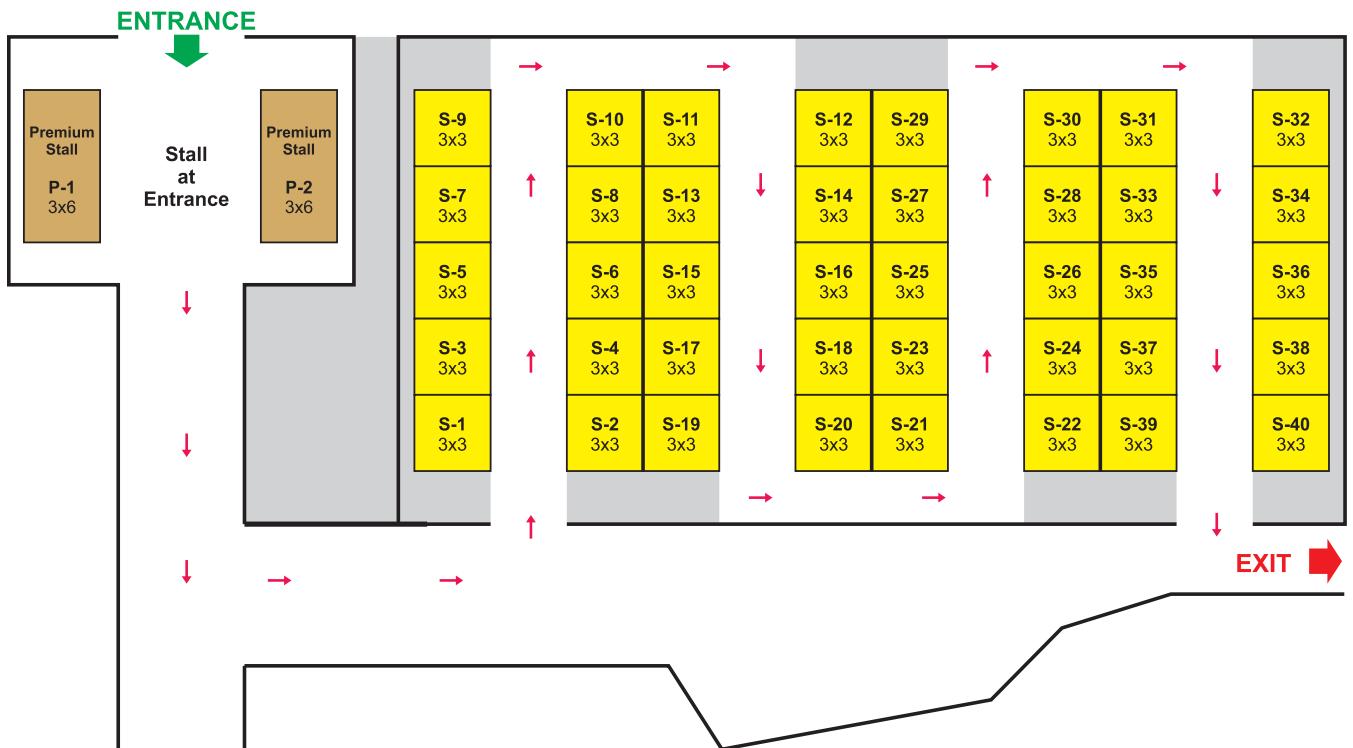
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CMDA Office

CMDA B2B IT Expo 2019 - Stall Layout



CMDA B2B IT Expo 2019 Stall Rate Charges

| Sr.No. | Size* | No. of Stall | Rate per Stall | GST @ 18% | Total Amount** |
|--------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1 | 6 x 3 Premium Stall | 2 | 2,00,000 | 36,000 | 2,36,000 |
| 2 | 3 x 3 Stall | 40 | 1,00,000 | 18,000 | 1,18,000 |

* Size and area are in Sq.Mtr.

CMDA B2B IT Expo 2019 Deliverables

| Sr. No. | Deliverables | Sponsorship | Registration Form & Badges Partner | 3 x 3 Stall Holder | Banner Branding |
|---------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | 3,00,000 + GST 18% = 3,54,000 | 50,000 + GST 18% = 59,000 | 1,00,000 + GST 18% = 1,18,000 | 50,000 + GST 18% = 59,000 |
| 1 | Premium Stall of 6 x 3 | Yes | No | No | No |
| 2 | Main Arch | Yes | No | No | No |
| 3 | Logo on all EDM | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 4 | Registration Counter Branding | Yes | No | No | No |
| 5 | Highlighted Logo on Website | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 6 | One colour Page advertisement in directory | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| 7 | Logo On Chekerbox | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| 8 | Food Coupons (Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Hi-Tea) | For 4 person | For 2 person | For 2 person | No |

CMDA B2B IT Expo 2019 Branding Charges

| Sr.No. | Particulars | Qty | Rate | GST 18% | Total Amount |
|--------|------------------------------------|-----|--------|---------|--------------|
| 1 | Main Arch Branding | 1 | 100000 | 18000 | 118000 |
| 2 | Banner 4 x 3 Meter | 6 | 50000 | 9000 | 59000 |
| 3 | Registration form & Badges partner | -- | 50000 | 9000 | 59000 |

'THE INDIAN MARKET IS VIBRANT AND EAGER TO ADOPT NEW TECHNOLOGIES'

There has been a paradigm shift in the Indian storage market, in terms of maturity of the buyers and operators, which is now at par with the global market. Speaking to CRN India, **Milan Shetti**, GM, Storage, HPE, shares the evolution journey, what are the current market trends and how uniquely HPE is positioned to cater to the changing consumer trends

By Nivedan Prakash

Please tell us briefly about your observations of the storage market

The storage market is changing dramatically. With the portfolio we have today and the lead with technologies, the focus area is AI driven, cloud ready and includes as-a-service experience – both financially as well as in terms of cloud like experience. These have been the key pillars that customers want. Interestingly, customers, both in US as well as the rest of the world, want the same thing. A decade ago, there was always a little bit of a digital divide in the trends which would happen in the western world and Far East. There was a time delay in the adoption of storage technologies and cloud technologies, etc, however it doesn't exist anymore.

In the past, we would have different technology pitches and business value proposition pitches for developing economies – especially in storage area – versus the developed economies. That difference doesn't exist now. The trend in India is just as equal and just as fast as the trends in the western world. Especially in the storage domain, it's all about data. Hence, the portfolio which we have for HPE from 3PAR, Nimble and StoreOnce, has facilitated our growth. The Indian market is vibrant and eager

to adopt new technologies.

Has the Indian market matured in comparison to some of the other global markets?

I see a distinct change in the maturity of buyers and operators, which is at a world-class level. There is the same dialogue, buying patterns, sophistication and maturity of buyers in India. The Indian economy and Indian buyers are truly global, especially in the storage space.

What are the common challenges facing customers from across industries; how do you address them?

There are three major issues that customers are looking to address. The first being, managing and operating at scale, because data sets have grown rapidly and the need for data from the Edge to the core, to the cloud is vast. Secondly, customers have realised that it's a hybrid world, so everything needs to be connected to cloud – whether it is the Edge or the core. The third challenge is around the CapEx and OpEx discussion. It's a subscription economy, wherein customers want to pay only for what they use. These three are the top

three pain points of customers across the world.

We have aligned our strategy exactly to these three big pain points. Managing and operating at scale cannot happen by just assigning people to solve the problem. Automation, machine learning and AI are needed. Thus, the first pillar of our strategy is AI driven. This is where technologies such as InfoSight and predictive analytics step in. It's about knowing problems before they occur and advising customers on what environment they should be using.

To address the challenge of cloud connect, anything we do – from a storage portfolio standpoint – has a cloud connect today. This is important for customers, so that they know that mobility exists. The third pain point is the CapEx and OpEx transition. GreenLake and our flexible capacity services allow customers to pay as they grow.

You have been the architect of some of the recent acquisitions made by HPE. What did you keep in mind during these acquisitions and how have you redesigned the offerings?

I was the architect for the 3PAR,

SimpliVity and Nimble acquisitions. These have been thoughtful acquisitions, because we kept trying to figure out customer needs, and ensure that these acquisitions fit into those segments. With Nimble, we got the InfoSight technology which was critical for us to perform predictive analytics. We could have probably done it in-house, but machine learning and AI is about making sure you have processed historic data. Nimble, from its inception, has collected enough datasets, making the algorithms much more sophisticated, robust and industry leading.

SimpliVity, alongwith the HyperConverged market, was going to take off, so we also brought that into our fold. Prior to that, acquisition of 3PAR – which has big data stores and high-end systems – was essential.

Our vision is get InfoSight across all the three platforms and the other platforms. We do predictive analytics not only on Nimble, but also on 3PAR and SimpliVity. We have also wrapped it all together with StoreOnce and data protection. We are very thoughtful about any acquisition, and we perform intense market research. We also look at the analyst and customer communities and then we process the data to figure out what are the top three pain points for today, and what is the sustainable differentiation we can have.

Generally, some of the pain points or some of the hype cycles have a shelf life. It is crucial to have a sustainable differentiation. AI was that big sustainable differentiator for us. Nobody comes close to it from any of the infrastructure providers, and large or small competitors. That's why we spent US\$ 1.2 billion to acquire Nimble. Now we also have good storage stack from it. With this portfolio, we have been able to make strong inroads into the market.

For the longest period of time, the storage industry was getting aged. The technology sets were not improving from some of the competitors. Now, with a fresh portfolio and as we tie it to the compute infrastructure, Synergy Composable Architecture, it is a breath of fresh air for customers who are looking for management at scale, cloud connect and as-a-service experience.



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THERE ARE MANY CUSTOMERS WHO ARE AT DIFFERENT POINTS OF THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY. AT THE END OF THE DAY, PEOPLE STILL BUY FROM PEOPLE, PEOPLE STILL DEPLOY WITH PEOPLE AND PEOPLE STILL TRUST PEOPLE AND THAT'S WHERE THE GLOBAL SI COMMUNITY AND HPE COME TOGETHER. WE HAVE THE TOOLS, EXPERTISE, DEEP TECHNOLOGY BACKGROUND. WHEREAS, SIS CAN PROVIDE THE PEOPLE, THE RELATIONSHIP AND TRUST, SO JOINTLY WE CAN PROVIDE THE INTELLIGENCE ABOUT STORAGE

MILAN SHETTI,
GM, STORAGE, HPE

How have new capabilities such as hybrid cloud data protection and copy data management further strengthened your storage portfolio?

When we announced StoreOnce hybrid cloud and the copy data management portfolio, it was a massive product refresh. With this, we can have 3PAR and Nimble connected for data protection through StoreOnce and also to the cloud connect through StoreOnce. This provides another way to do data protection and backup to the cloud, in addition to Nimble.

Today's world needs 100 per cent availability at any given time. Data protection and copy data management have become strong features of the primary storage portfolio. You shouldn't keep too many copies of data, where you're spending more money; and at the same time, your backup and recovery should be aware of the application and primary storage. If you do not know the context of what you are backing up, your restore time gets longer.

RMC 6.0, which was a release in StoreOnce and has strong tie with Nimble and 3PAR portfolio, has got applications aware of context, primary storage, backup and restore. By architecting it that way, we can achieve unbelievable speed in terms of backup and restore, which now has 10x improvement in the backup speed and similarly bigger restore speeds as and when needed. The context driven, the app context and primary storage context are very important, because backup should be a part of primary storage workflow. Hence, the secondary storage with the StoreOnce and RMC 6.0 is an integral part of the storage.

Many companies have been adopting cloud-first strategy. How can customers leverage the benefits of cloud through StoreOnce?

Couple of years ago, customers stated that one of their strategies was cloud-first. Interestingly, HPE was the first vendor to say that cloud is going to be hybrid. This year, more and more customers are acknowledging a hybrid cloud-first strategy. This is a great

validation of HPE's strategy on the big element of its corporate strategy, which was to make hybrid IT simple. The StoreOnce and the RM6.0 announcements are perfect, because they are about making hybrid IT simple by making data protection as hybrid cloud-first.

Most customers in India are hesitant to adopt a hybrid cloud strategy. What is your message for them?

We ask customers to try our portfolio and see what we can deliver on hybrid cloud-first strategy. We associate with our partner community and jointly approach customers as trusted advisors and demonstrate how hybrid IT can get simpler. People want to see the proof first, though we have enough proof and enough references on making hybrid IT simple, including the new announcements of StoreOnce and RM6.0.

We are also seeing the concept sales cycle shrinking to months, even in cases of the most sceptical customers. The deployment cycle has also shrunk to months, so I think the adoption is actually getting faster. For example, InfoSight and StoreOnce Cloud Bank is a SaaS portal rather than application which the customer has to deploy. This is valuable because customers don't have to install anything in their environment. They can just use this portal and observe first-hand, the benefits of hybrid cloud. Conversations with customers are now getting simpler, because they don't have to install something brand new to reap the benefits. Hybrid cloud adoption in India is going to be faster than any other technology and that's why the gap between the global trends and those in India is shrinking.

How are HPE's as-a-service offerings, especially in the storage space, changing the market dynamics?

HPE is well positioned in this area, because of the as-a-service offerings and its financial services arm. Storage is consumable and it can be metered. Compute can be metered too, but it has transitions. In storage, there is a predictable capacity that you consume.

Inherently, with that property of storage – if done right, which is what HPE does – you can predict your spend cycles.

You can predict what your consumption is going to be, based on the workload, and how you should plan for it. This is going to be a strength for HPE; we call it Intelligent Storage. We are adding intelligence into the storage infrastructure and that intelligence comes from AI and business transformation and as a service. We will not be in a world where people are just buying upfront storage. It is always going to be based on capacity consumption. Also not many customers will delete data, so the consumption is going to be always bigger than what it was before. The only thing which is different is the rate of consumption. In a flex capacity model, you pay as you grow, which is the only way I see the industry will ever consume storage, going forward.

What sort of innovations in your storage portfolio will create a new wave in the market?

There is an ability we have in InfoSight, called Recommendation Engine, which does predictive forecasting or warning of any problems in the environment – it's about managing and orchestration. We believe that InfoSight is going to be that data browser or data management browsers and we are using this position to not only make the predictions and the recommendations on what is happening in the environment, but also to provide insight into what architecture and what products you should buy, or how you should use the technology. That tool informs customers not only about their IT infrastructure, but also about their workloads and what process changes and workflow changes they need in the workload. That is what the next wave is; and that's what we are bullish on.

Based on your interactions with Indian system integrators, what message do you have for them in terms of your storage portfolio?

There are many customers who are at different points of the digital transformation journey. At the end of the

day, people still buy from people, people still deploy with people and people still trust people and that's where the global SI community and HPE come together. We have the tools, expertise, deep technology background. Whereas, SIs can provide the people, the relationship and trust, so jointly we can provide the intelligence about storage. SI partners work with us to help customers jump on the digital transformation journey and accelerate success.

The more intelligence we have in storage, the more we partner with SIs, the more they can have a trusted advisory with their customers and an intimate relationship. This results from the trust and that trust comes from the automation and intelligence which we provide.

The amount of workload which exists with customers is massive. For instance, there is an on-premise workload which we call the traditional workload. Then there is a second set of workloads, which is around scale out storage. The third set of workloads is cloud native. Whereas, the fourth set of workloads include IoT related services. These are different workload characteristics, and every customer has all four.

At the same time, when we talk to SIs, we lead the conversation with workloads, because management of the vast amount of workload is not humanly possible and it is going to need intelligent storage to figure out what workload goes where. Furthermore, these workloads also have a life cycle. You can have data generated by IoT, go to the cloud, go to on-premise cloud and to the traditional storage, because they are all tied in. A good example would be of a point of sale for a retail shop, which happens at the Edge. The expansion of the workload is the area where we partner with SIs. There needs to be an intelligent storage to make sure that there is the right workload, right mix and the right flow.

This is unique about our offerings to our SIs. They like the workload led conversations and have realised the need to have intelligent storage. The intelligent storage, predictive analytics, primary storage, StoreOnce and RMC as the workflow, make a lot of sense from that standpoint, but the tip of the spear is explosion of the workload.

PELCO IS IN THE PROCESS OF EXPANDING ITS SI BASE IN INDIA

Since India joined the MEIA region, Pelco enjoys access to the Customer Experience Center and the Dedicated PGTI Training Lab in Dubai. The company is also in the process of expanding its system integrator (SI) base and is conducting dedicated roadshows. In an interaction with CRN India, **Saranbir Baweja**, Country Manager – India, Pelco, shares more details

By Nivedan Prakash

What are the prevailing trends in the surveillance industry?

Some of the major trends we see in the surveillance industry, especially in the CCTV space, include increase in the presence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cyber security needs. AI has been around for decades, but recent advances in Deep Neural Network technology and the increasing availability of inexpensive computer resources enable AI to make a significant impact in the policy-intensive physical security arena – intrusion detection, access control, video surveillance, fire detection and suppression.

With the emergence of digital technologies like AI, Machine Learning (ML), and Internet of Things (IoT), what sort of innovations are offered by Pelco?

One product that, we feel, leads the security industry is VideoXpert – our video management system. With features like Intelligent Analytic Overlays and VxMaps, VideoXpert provides a robust AI solution.

How significant is the Indian market for Pelco; what's the contribution of this market to the global revenues of the company?

The Indian market is an important and a growing market for Pelco. We were the first surveillance company to



include a BIS certification across the entire product line. Before the end of 2018, we were also planning to release the GFC range, including the mini dome, bullet, and box cameras. The Indian market significantly contributes to Pelco's global revenues through the acquisition of new and powerful talent. There have been sweeping changes in the last 18 months. Pradeep Nair, for example, has onboarded the company as the Vice President of the MEIA region. I recently began my role as Country Manager since the beginning of this year, and we also just hired a senior sales manager from a close competitor.

How do you see the role of channel partners evolving in this era of digital disruption?

Our channel partners occupy a crucial role at Pelco. Since India joined the MEIA

region, we now have access to the Customer Experience Center and the Dedicated PGTI Training Lab in Dubai. We are also in the process of expanding our SI base and are conducting dedicated roadshows. We trust the importance of channel partners, particularly in India, and we thank them for their engagement with Pelco.

How are your broader offerings and increased incentives accelerating business growth of partners in the country; and how are your sales enablement tools and rewards programs boosting partners' revenue opportunities?

We have kept a lucrative incentive program for channel partners who sell our end-to-end solutions. We also have new online lead management system, wherein we can reach back to people who have shown interest in Pelco. We are passionate about providing support to our end-users through professional services, whether they need training, field support, remote services, or advanced phone support. At Pelco, we don't just sell products; we provide solutions that meet all types of security needs. We help our partners deliver solutions for specific verticals. It is our duty to understand end-users' needs and challenges, so our partners can provide the best solutions at the best price.

SCHNEIDER AIMS TO ON-BOARD PARTNERS WITH RETAIL, HEALTHCARE, BFSI CLIENTELE

Having forayed into various new market segments over the years, Schneider Electric has also planned to build expertise of its Tier 2 partners around Edge Computing in 2019. **Gurudutt M**, Director – Channels, India & SAARC, Schneider Electric (IT Division), shares more details

By Nivedan Prakash

How is Schneider Electric uniquely positioned in its business?

We are in the business of critical cooling and power, and we drive this through IT distributors and partners. Especially in the area of data centre and Edge Computing, there has been a huge focus on training and enablement. We have a partnership level called 'Elite DC Partners' – the premium partnership level. We have invested heavily in enablement of partners, allowing them to design, build and operate a data centre by themselves. We also have a services bureau for monitoring of non-IT devices in a data centre – we are one of the few companies to possess this. When this is coupled with our Elite DC Partnership program, it creates a strong value proposition for our partners. Behind these initiatives, we have an objective to encourage partners to place services as the main portfolio, instead of products – this is helping us to drive the momentum. However, we are also strongly focused on the products business, with constant introduction of new, differentiating products.

How do partners qualify for the Elite DC Partnership?

Currently, it is only by invitation in selected territories. However, in 2019,



we will urge more partners to join, subject to qualification in the criteria set by us. In the next phase of expansion, we will focus more on key verticals such as retail and BFSI, where there's a need to build small server rooms or Edge Computing. We will be looking at partners who have such clientele.

Currently, we have 20 partners and we aim to grow the number to 35 this year. Additionally, we have a separate partnership program for our products business. The mindset of partners is also changing; they want to move up the chain. There is a plethora of services that our partners can foray into. For instance, Monitoring as a Service, Shifting as a Service, etc. We have another program – EcoXpert – for

building management solutions.

How has the company's IT business evolved over the years?

Our presence in India spans almost 25 years. We have a global manufacturing hub in Bengaluru, with huge export rates – the Indian market consumes six per cent of our total production, the rest is exported. Our journey started when IT was evolving from small desktop UPS; slowly we forayed into online UPS, which was sold by our distributors. We have about 7,000 partners in India, who are serviced by four distributors. The evolution of our business started in 2008, with the demand for organised data centres. Following this, the focus started shifting towards building efficiency in data centres. Another new business area is the manufacturing industry, which requires UPS to optimise operations. Our company has a stronghold in these areas, which is backed by our 'Power Partner' category of partners. Our products offer repeat revenue for our partners and ourselves. A lot of partners have shifted to this line of business, due to ample of opportunities for services revenue.

Many Tier 2 partners are willing to develop themselves as elite

Specialisation areas under new partner program

| Registered Partner | Select Partner | Premier Partner | Elite Partner |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete online profile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete online profile • Achieve at least one Select certification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete online profile • Achieve at least one Premier certification of my three different Select certification • Achieve revenue requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete online profile • Achieve at least one data center certification • Achieve revenue requirements |
| No certification | Business Networks | Business Networks | Data center |
| | Software | Software | Prefabricated Data center |
| | Cooling | Cooling | |
| | SOHO | IT Power | |
| | IT Power | Industrial Secure power | |
| | Industrial Secure power | Managed Service provider | |
| | Managed Service provider | | |

partners. Does Schneider have a partner program for this set of partners?

With reduction in opportunities around captive data centres, there are increasing opportunities in Edge Computing. We are trying to drive a program for partners who may be interested in this, but can't invest as heavily as elite partners. This is a shortened program focusing on expertise around Edge Computing; this will be launched in Q1 2019. Our distributors are bullish on this program, which allows their Tier 2 partners to gain expertise. We have three categories of partners – Elite, Premier and Select – and we want to bring Edge Computing as a certification at the Select level. We are expecting to have 100-200 Select partners, having expertise around Edge Computing, as it serves as a stepping stone for partners who want to enter the software-defined space.

Partners form the core of our company's DNA. We already have a growing number of SI partnerships, and we now want to grow our Tier 2 IT channel. Through our interactions, we have learned that Data Centre Infrastructure Management is one of the key areas for customers this year. To

tap these opportunities, we will work with our specialised channel partners and push our EcoStruxure platform.

With emergence of new technologies, are you putting special efforts to onboard partners, especially for the EcoStruxure platform?

Onboarding partners was tough until last year, but now awareness levels have increased among partners. In certain cases, we also work on a GTM approach. This is the right time to onboard more partners, as they can integrate our offerings with the rest of their IT services. EcoStruxure is a great platform. We have a lot of it in the Smart Cities space; for instance, around data centres, data centre surveillance, etc.

One of the GTM strategies, which has worked well for us, include managed services partners in addition to our Elite DC partners. Currently, our EcoStruxure business is completely driven by Elite DC partners, but we want to explore business possibilities through

alternative channels as well.

How are you ensuring profitability for your partners?

We sign a standard agreement with our partners, pre-defining rebates and MDF. This is coupled with various tactical programs. We predominantly operate on the MDF mode with our solution partners. We also provide marketing support through our partner portal. We have 250 Select partners and 90 Premier partners; whereas, our Elite partners include large product-centric players. We offer the products, services and tools necessary for our partners to be more successful and ultimately more profitable.

How critical is the success of your partners and what are your expectations from them?

We want our partners to explore growth opportunities, which will eventually also help us grow. We have been successful in the new application areas as well. We are set in the right direction, in terms of our partner ecosystem and distributor ecosystem. With our strong manufacturing hub in India, we are definitely set for success. We will continue our training and enablement efforts to ensure that we enter new application areas.

D-LINK HAS BIG PLANS FOR ITS LARGE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS IN 2019

Being a pioneer in the networking space, D-Link has marked significant success in the Indian market. With enhanced focus on large enterprise business, the company has planned big for its partner community who have been instrumental in driving growth.

Rohit Purushottam, VP – Enterprise Business, D-Link (India), reveals more details

By Mohit Rathod

Please elaborate on D-Link's strengths and efforts in the enterprise business

Having presence in 66 countries, we are flexing our muscles in every market. We are largely known in the market as a product company, mainly focusing on consumer business, that contributes 60-65 per cent to our overall business. We know the pulse of our consumers and we create our products accordingly. Our enterprise business is also doing well, which is further divided into three segments – project, stock-n-sell, and large projects. Under the enterprise business, the project based business is completely focused towards our customers and partners. D-Link is working with enterprises and partners to form a complete ecosystem of technology, solutions and strategies that shall enable businesses to successfully navigate to digital the platform.

The other segment of enterprise business is stock-and-sell, for which we have created a separate SMB system, wherein we operate through our national distributors – Redington and Ingram Micro. Additionally, we have 80 sub-distributors. Then we have large enterprise market, for which we have created a focused team for handling large



strategic projects; this also includes government initiatives like Digital India. Under this segment, we have recently bagged projects from BSNL and Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Safe and Secure Gujarat, Keltron, etc.

Then we have telcos and ISP whom we work with and provide complete network solution for large projects that act as a backbone for network infrastructure. Infact, we have been working to provide network solutions to Smart Cities. In this space, we are working with BSNL and MTNL to create a complete infrastructure for this market.

Overall business has been doing well and we have been growing 15-20 per cent month-on-month, for the past five to six months. Large project business has been among the key drivers for this growth. Due to the scale of large projects, it's difficult to define its percentage in our overall business but large project business does make for major pie of our growth.

Further, to enhance our business and engagement in the government segment, we have created a GEM Vertical under enterprise business. This step will ensure that business will be more focused and foster growth.

With fresh focus on the enterprise business, how are you helping organisations in their digital transformation journey?

With the government's new digital focus, we are seeing a massive shift. We have also aligned our business with government's efforts by creating an ecosystem with our partners, in order to deliver solutions. In line with this effort, we have been providing wireless networks and surveillance; however, in wake of emerging technologies, we have added Internet of Things (IoT) to our solutions. We are delivering this in two

ways - the consumer and telcos, wherein we provide our value-added services through telcos. In addition we are also creating apps; for instance, we have created a router configuration system – a one-touch mobile application to configure the router. Available for consumers and technicians, this provides ease in services to service providers.

What gives D-Link a competitive advantage over other players in the market?

Firstly, it is about the right products with the right brand. Our legacy spans over 30 years, and we are one of the only two companies in this space, which are not acquired by anyone. Thus, stability of our company is one of the differentiators for us. Secondly, we offer a service network which is unique to D-Link. Our service network in India is spread across 13 states. Additionally, we have 250 pick-up points in Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets. Moreover, we are a viable company with channel partners and solution providers as our key propagators. We are more focused on the Edge infrastructure development with a streamlined approach, wherein we serve at the Edge level for the best performance.

How critical has been the role of the partner ecosystem in D-Link's growth journey?

Our partners have been instrumental in our successful journey and they continue to contribute. We provide partners with the primary information, and they inturn help in our business. We have partner engagement and training modules; we also have a partner portal, wherein we engage with them on daily basis. Furthermore, we also organise skills development and management activities for our partners. D-Link is a 100 per cent partner-oriented company. We have a strong team of national distributors, 80 sub-distributors and over 2,000 SIs in India.

In this era of solutions and software, have the partners also undergone the transition; what is your strategy?

Partners have been significantly

adapting to the changes. They are now adopting new technologies and want to serve customers more efficiently with a complete package. Similarly in our domain, we provide everything from switches, structured cabling, IP surveillance to routers. With our array of offerings, any partner who is attached with us can offer an end-to-end networking solution to customers. We are a product-centric company. We have also laid high emphasis on innovation. In collaboration with our R&D team, we have created cloud platform for our wireless solution through which we can manage one lakh Access Points (APs) at a time. We are also working with governments on OpenWRT networks. Further, we have been witnessing the buzz around software defined networking (SDN), and we already have SDN products in our portfolio. We are working with a company called Pluribus Networks which provides OEM diagnostics software, bringing the entire data centre on a single control. In 2019, we will boost our focus on SDN switches and industrial switches.

How are you accelerating growth of the passive networking business?

A few years ago, there were talks about the death of the structured cabling business and everything turning wireless. However we have been able to sustain this business by adhering to new compliances. We have expanded our passive product portfolio which includes new trends like fibre optics (OM5), data centre solutions, Cat7 and so on. Our channel ecosystem works with us for the stock-and-sell of passive networking business; whereas, the business with customers and SIs falls under large enterprise segment.

What are your efforts to increase the SMB business?

Our SMB business has also been doing well. We are coming up with a new portfolio which will address the upcoming demand of the higher bandwidth, especially in long range POE. These are targeted towards Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. We have also added the wireless component to our SMB product

portfolio. Additionally, we have also expanded our surveillance product line. Such innovations and diversification are helping us reach-out to the customer better and in-turn is contributing to the growth of our SMB business.

How are you preparing the channel ecosystem to capture more opportunities in the market?

Channel requires right margins; they don't want to sell just the topline products, particularly in the SMB space. The second aspect deals with speed and effective delivery of services. We have already launched a partner development program, which provides thrust to the partner community. From January onwards, we will also be running a point-based program to ensure better margins for partners. In Q2 2019, we will make a big announcement in terms of partner program, wherein we will do completely new things for our partner community.

For our large enterprise business, we work closely with large solution providers. Through these partners, we are working with several PSUs in India. For example, we did the complete cabling for the Statue of Unity in Gujarat, and we also have our industrial switches deployed there. Furthermore, we are also working on Smart City projects such as Ahmedabad Smart City and Prayagraj Smart City through L&T.

Which key thrust areas will result in rich dividends in the future?

Right strategy and innovations in terms of right products will drive the growth in the future. Our extensive product portfolio includes high power PoE switches, long range point-to-point / multipoint wireless communication, upto 12MP enterprise grade intelligent video surveillance, long range PoE switches to support upto 250-metre distance on a copper cable. With this, we are confident of meeting the high bandwidth demands of large businesses and enterprises. In 2019, our focus shall be more towards the end-to-end solution that will let us cater to every need of the customer and partners.

INDIA, A KEY HIGH GROWTH MARKET FOR SONICWALL

Debasish Mukherjee, Country Head, SonicWall speaks to **Salvi Mittal** about his company's repositioning strategy as a security leader in the country

What are the strategies adopted by SonicWall in security space in India?

Since the start of the year, there were three key priorities for SonicWall globally; first, marketing and branding; second, re-organisation and third, innovation. We have launched programmes in marketing and branding, including SonicWall's Fear Less campaign, featuring a selection of strong creatures armed to provide protection across a number of advanced threats (for branding) – a play on our ability to enable businesses to be securely protected so they have time to focus on their core priorities and be literally "Fear Less". The market has responded very well to this branding and messaging, and also are more aware of all different products available.

Further, we have launched our SecureFirst partner programme last year to re-stimulate interest from our existing partners globally and to also recruit new partners. This programme was launched across India in the middle of 2017. Globally, currently, more than 27,000 partners are registered with SonicWall. In India, more than 600 partners have registered, of which 200 are new ones.

In the previous eight quarters, SonicWall has launched more than 40 new products. and has created tiered programme architecture on global standards but customised it to address Indian partners.

There are a lot of training features introduced by SonicWall University programme. The broader programme is

"Secure First", under which three activities are covered by SonicWall – 1) Overdrive: It's a marketing and demand generation tool for partners to promote and advertise; 2) SonicWall University, which is used to educate both our employees and partners; 3) SonicWall Partner Portal, for partners to access the latest information on the programme, promotions and deal registration.

From a customer acquisition perspective, SonicWall has started working closely with the government sector, managed security service providers (MSSP) among others.

SonicWall was also planning to expand product engineering in Bengaluru. What is the progress on that front?

India expansion is the part of our global expansion strategy. SonicWall has seen good engagement from APJ and Indian markets. There were many unique requirements coming from organisations from India. Post that we have decided to build its Indian talent pool and start R&D operations here. This way, SonicWall addresses the Indian market and as well as it (Indian R&D operations) helps to grow the business.

India and Japan are the key growth markets for SonicWall. The Indian market has been growing at a very good rate. So, globally, it was decided to focus on key growing markets in India and Japan. Now, SonicWall has started investing in technology, R&D centre, so that we can support, maintain or address both the global and India markets.

How are these creating opportunities in India related to cyber security?

Wherever there is data, there is a need to provide security. Thanks to Government of India initiatives to digitise a growing number of services, there are opportunities not only for SonicWall, but for all. Lot of things like Smart Cities or digitisation of projects is expanding the opportunity horizon.

How are you repositioning SonicWall as a security leader in the country?

SonicWall was always known for SME business or SME product. For the last 25 years, the company was positioned as a SME product. SonicWall is also doing lot of enterprise work, 50-55 per cent of our business vary from country-to-country, but from India 55 per cent business is coming from enterprise and 45 per cent from SMEs.

We have started a layered solution approach and is no more just a next-generation firewall company (NGFW). SonicWall has uncovered the real security pains of the customer – so SonicWall is primed to provide a 360-degree solution.

Last year, the company launched a unique sandboxing solution. Most security firms have a sandboxing solution but SonicWall is the only firm providing multi-layered sandboxing solution.

Recently, we have also launched a new product called 'Real-Time Deep Memory Inspection' (RTDMI). In the last six months, the technology has captured 27,000 unique threats, which



the industry has not seen yet. This new technology is patented by SonicWall to capture unknown attacks.

As the competition is growing what is your strategy to expand security in India?

In India, SonicWall has seen good traction and is growing at a very high rate. Now, we are taking a very systematic approach rather than generic. SonicWall has started working with different verticals like working on government projects, actively participating in telcos and NSPs, educational and corporate deals.

What differentiates you in the market?

Every competitor has its own strengths. SonicWall stands out for its technology. It has patented technology 'Real-Time Deep Memory Inspection' (RTDMI). More than 70 per cent of the traffic is encrypted, which will hardly observe http or https.

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RECENTLY, WE HAVE ALSO LAUNCHED A NEW PRODUCT CALLED 'REAL-TIME DEEP MEMORY INSPECTION' (RTDMI). IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, THE TECHNOLOGY HAS CAPTURED 27,000 UNIQUE THREATS, WHICH THE INDUSTRY HAS NOT SEEN YET. THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY IS PATENTED BY SONICWALL TO CAPTURE UNKNOWN ATTACKS.

DEBASISH MUKHERJEE,
COUNTRY HEAD, SONICWALL

SonicWall foresaw this technology 10 years ago and launched it. SonicWall has integrated solutions for its customers. Competitors might be good at only one specific product and not the entire portfolio. Having an end-to-end solution capability is SonicWall's biggest strength in the market.

Please elaborate on your future initiatives

We are forging more opportunities in the larger enterprise space, gaining traction with the telco-grid firewall and within the next six months there will be more product launches. SonicWall is currently placed in the Gartner 'Challengers' quadrant. Now, the focus is to move back into the Gartner 'Leaders' quadrant. Organisations looking for security solutions shouldn't just go by market leadership. They should evaluate by total effectiveness. Effectiveness is the solution and their solution should be layered.

'THE INDIAN MARKET IS A VERY PROMISING ECONOMIC ENTITY'

Hank Lee, Manager – South Asia, ATEN International, in a conversation with CRN India's **Rachana Jha**, speaks about ATEN's presence in the Indian market and the diversified strategies for channel partners across different regions

What is your perception of the Indian market; how are you coping with the competition here?

The Indian market is a very promising economic entity. We consider Taiwan as an IT island for hardware and India as a software kingdom. So, it is an interesting combination between Taiwan and India. Currently we are bringing our innovative technology to India as the IT vertical is booming. We are sensing more and more big data centre deployments in the near future. Speaking about the enterprise segment, majorly MNCs and the government sector, are all looking towards the digital transformation initiative, led by the government. This is a great opportunity and the right direction for ATEN, as we will be contributing directly to this big IT wave.

In India, the future of AV looks promising than other industries because as far as innovation is considered, Indians invest a lot in their meeting rooms, auditoriums and showrooms. The notorious price sensitivity does not stop Indians from investing in high quality AV products. ATEN, while emphasising on high quality, has managed to merge IT and AV, taking India through a radical transformation on both sides. As everything is available in India, i.e., from the top-end to Chinese brands, we see a potential market.

ATEN, WHILE EMPHASISING ON HIGH QUALITY, HAS MANAGED TO MERGE IT AND AV, TAKING INDIA THROUGH A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION ON BOTH SIDES

In terms of digitalisation, what are the challenges you have found in India, vis-a-vis the other markets?

In digital transformation, the first thing to consider is security. The second challenge is to deliver the real value solutions of digital transformation. Our products can fulfill most of the criteria; but nowadays, as everything is defined by software, the risks are always prevalent. Considering the products, the best security option is a hardware solution because if customers want to access data centres, they need to access our security switch first, then access the server. Our switch is, however, difficult to hack, compared to software, as we provide different levels of security access. This factor forms our primary differentiator.

What is ATEN's go to market strategy?

Our GTM strategy is basic and traditional. Our complete emphasis is on providing good service. India has wide territories and we are able to

provide our customers a convenient way to access our products. We are looking for more partners and educate them with the technology and products that we handle. Appointment of regional distributors, system integrators and good relationships with the government help us to grow in the Indian market.

Please give an insight into your national distribution model and regional distribution model for penetration into the Indian market

We now use both the models. I strongly believe that India has multi-territory markets. We need to set up different marketing and channel strategies targeting various regions. Our channel model is strong enough to conduct the business. Secondly, we are keen on promoting our business development sales force. We deliver ATEN's value directly to big accounts.

How many partners do you have at present?

We have one national distributor and multiple regional distributors under the national distributor. We work with regional distributors directly to leverage or empower them, to penetrate into market and then bring the business to the national distributor. National distributors put our stock in their IMA centre. Gradually, we will empower our regional distributors to have the ability to deliver the service,

so that everyone can access our primary service centres easily from every region.

How are you targeting SMBs in India?

Our partners are doing well in the SMB space. By pushing our existing channels, we are able to provide all product lines for the SMB market. Market share in the SMB sector is very good. As ATEN India has a remarkable presence in the country, now our target would be medium and large scale corporates. These companies are looking for innovative technologies and we are preparing to cater innovative solutions by incorporating our latest technology.

Which region of India generates the maximum revenue?

South India is the IT hub of India and we generate more revenue from this region. Each region has its own characteristics. In the north, the government sector and in the west, BFSI contributes to the growth as these are high potential markets. Sometimes, the eastern region also contributes well.

Do you plan to expand your footprint in the North East region as well?

This will be in the second stage. Right now we are focusing on increasing our manpower in the south and the west regions. We are not directly engaged in the North East. Our partners are already performing quite well there. We get more tender-based projects from the NE region. We need some time to build the relationship to adapt to the culture there to fully-fledgedly conduct the business.

How well defined is your channel ecosystem? What steps are you taking to penetrate the market and make your partners focus on innovation?

Training is the most important part to implement the channel business. We have also launched some digital marketing campaigns to raise our



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OUR PARTNERS ARE DOING WELL IN THE SMB SPACE. BY PUSHING OUR EXISTING CHANNELS, WE ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE ALL PRODUCT LINES FOR THE SMB MARKET. MARKET SHARE IN THE SMB SECTOR IS VERY GOOD. AS ATEN INDIA HAS A REMARKABLE PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRY, NOW OUR TARGET WOULD BE MEDIUM AND LARGE SCALE CORPORATES. THESE COMPANIES ARE LOOKING FOR INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND WE ARE PREPARING TO CATER INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS BY INCORPORATING OUR LATEST TECHNOLOGY

HANK LEE,
MANAGER – SOUTH ASIA, ATEN INTERNATIONAL

brand name and deliver relevant information to our potential customers. Our core ideology is to deliver hands-on training. Our pre-sales team goes to our major product partners to deliver product training or hands-on training and certify them.

We also visit end-users to collect pain points, to see what kind of solutions they can adopt. With our different product line, we can combine solutions to solve their problem. Therefore it's a solution based ecosystem.

'WE SEE OURSELVES AS AN MSSP-FIRST ORGANISATION'

Adi Dar, CEO, Cyberbit – a subsidiary of Elbit Systems and provider of cyber range training and simulation platforms, IT/OT threat detection and security orchestration, in an interview with **Sandhya Michu**, talks about the changing cybersecurity regulations in India and their impact on the BFSI sector. He believes that Cyberbit can truly help BFSI organisations comply with the regulations and become a dominant player in this market

How has been the journey of Cyberbit in India so far; what are the opportunities in the market?

Cyberbit offers a portfolio of four products in India: a cyber range for cybersecurity simulation and training; SOAR (Security Orchestration, Automation and Response), to automate and streamline security operations; EDR (Endpoint Detection and Response), to detect advanced attacks that bypass conventional systems, and ICS/SCADA security for critical infrastructure networks. Within a short time from entering the market, Cyberbit was able to generate substantial traction for all four products. The high level of technology expertise in India, the awareness on security issues and the openness to innovation have all contributed to our rapid growth. Of course, none of this growth would have been possible if we hadn't built a wonderful regional team.

Our main focus in 2018 was the financial sector and this is projected to grow in 2019. What makes our offering appealing to the BFSI sector is our unique capability to provide products entirely on-premise, without sending sensitive data to the cloud. Unlike our competitors, our products can function in an entirely air-gapped infrastructure without any impact on our detection and analysis capabilities. This gives us a clear edge over other vendors because many customers, especially in the BFSI sector,



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WE LOOK AT THE INDIAN MARKET THROUGH THE LENS OF CHANNELS AND THIS SHAPES OUR ACTIVITY. WE HOLD QUARTERLY TRAININGS FOR SYSTEM INTEGRATORS AND TIER-1 PARTNERS IN EVERY REGION

ADI DAR,
CEO, CYBERBIT

are not willing to migrate to the cloud.

We are being approached by a significant amount of system integrators who are interested in partnering for large-scale projects, through implementation of our entire cybersecurity stack. This interest and activity with system integrators will lead to great success for both the channel and Cyberbit. We are also excited to be working with some of the biggest manufacturers in India to protect their factories and production lines from cyber sabotage and other malfunctions.

Please tell us about Cyberbit's core business focus areas in India

We mainly provide our cybersecurity services to the financial services, IT/ITeS, transportation, utility services, electricity, airport and educational organisations. Our India office is located in Bengaluru, with additional presence in Mumbai and Delhi. Currently, we have 15 employees in our sales and marketing team in India, and we are planning to increase this number to 20 in the coming months. We participate in local events, exhibitions and conferences to promote our products.

Cyberbit has recently partnered with Tech Data for distribution. Please elaborate on this alliance and the way forward

We are happy to be working with Tech Data to distribute our portfolio of

products. Tech Data is one of the world's largest distributors of technology products, services and solutions and we share important values of integrity, excellence and accountability. Under our agreement, Tech Data will distribute Cyberbit's entire portfolio including ICS/SCADA Security, Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR), SOAR and the Cyber Range training and simulation platform.

What are your specific plans for managed security service providers (MSSPs)?

The complexity and volumes of cyber threats have reached a critical level wherein even small businesses are forced to adopt advanced safety measures that were previously reserved for much larger organisations. Small businesses are not equipped with the cybersecurity workforce and the security product suite of a bank, or any large organisation for that matter. They do not employ incident response teams and do not manage a security operations center (SOC). This requires them to outsource security and drives the global trend of MSSPs. Last year we announced our relationships with India MSSPs QoS and AforeCyberSec and we will continue this trend this year.

We see ourselves as an 'MSSP-first' organisation, and we offer MSSPs a complete technology stack that includes our EDR, which is optimised for managed detection and response (MDR) services. Our SOAR technology enables MSSPs to dramatically scale up their managed SOC services, and our cyber range platform enables MSSPs, like QoS Technology in India, to provide training services. In addition, our OT monitoring solution allows MSSPs to enter the critical infrastructure market and offer services to oil and gas companies, manufacturing companies, electricity providers and power grids.

In terms of customer acquisition, can you share some of the recent project wins?

We have many customers in India, including one of the top banks which



uses Cyberbit's EDR solution and a global consulting firm using Cyberbit SOC 3D for its SOC. QoS Technology provides cybersecurity training and simulation powered by the Cyberbit Range. AforeCyberSec Technology is licensed to offer our SOC 3D SOC Orchestration Automation and Response (SOAR) platform. We have multiple international clients like Samsung, HPE, and Miami Dade College. Many of the top financial institutions in Israel and multiple global customers use our Cyber Range, SOC Orchestration and EDR solutions.

How does Cyberbit ensure its channel partners are able to drive better conversations with CIOs and CISOs?

We ensure that primarily by providing cutting-edge products with current and future industry needs and pains, making our entire portfolio attractive to CISOs and CIOs, with whom our partners are aiming to engage with. The shortage of skilled cybersecurity staff, increasing need for training, and the complexity and

volumes of alerts increase the demand for our Cyber Range and SOC orchestration products. The increase in financial attacks have placed EDR and SOC orchestration on the budgetary priority of financial and other large enterprise CISOs. Finally, the increasing threat on critical infrastructure is driving a high demand for ICS/SCADA security.

We complement this with significant support to our channel, by our entire team in India and our Israeli HQ, who regularly work with our partners to deliver an effective message and conduct joint marketing activities so the message can reach the right people in the right industries.

Cyberbit is a 100 per cent channel-driven organisation. We look at the Indian market through the lens of channels and this shapes our activity. We hold quarterly trainings for system integrators and Tier-1 partners in every region. The trainings are popular and well received. Our field sales team is always on the road, travelling to support our channel partners and secure wins.

AVAR 2018: STRENGTHENING THE SECURITY LANDSCAPE

The 21st Association of Anti-Virus Asia Researchers (AVAR) International Conference was held in Goa recently. K7 Computing organised the conference, in association with Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In)

By Rachana Jha

Focusing on the theme, 'The Dynamic Security Ecosystem', the 21st Association of Anti-Virus Asia Researchers (AVAR) International Conference was held in Goa recently, organised by K7 Computing and Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In). The event witnessed a gathering of over 400 participants, along with 67 speakers from 25 international security companies, who discussed the significant aspects of cybersecurity. The conference saw one of the largest gatherings of cybersecurity experts, researchers, product developers and eminent speakers from across the world.

K7 Computing has been associated with AVAR since its inception. Bringing back the event to India for the third time, J Kesavardhanan, MD & CEO, K7 Computing, said, "This was the third time when the international conference was hosted in India and we are thankful to AVAR for giving us the opportunity the second time. We strongly believe in spreading awareness on the need for wide adoption of cybersecurity solutions to protect data and devices. AVAR has given us a great opportunity to drive our cybersecurity mandate, bringing the industry together to discuss and develop an advanced roadmap to curb cyber threats. It has been a great experience for us being associated with AVAR and we look forward to more such experiences and

good work together."

"AVAR is an important technology platform to bring the global cybersecurity industry together to discuss and brainstorm on the technical way forward to deal with the evolving threat landscape," mentioned Kesavardhanan.

Commenting on AVAR 2018, Allan Dyer, Chairman, AVAR stated, "We are very glad to have held the 21st edition of AVAR in India, in association with K7 Computing for the second time.

Considering the expanding digitalisation, India is one of those nations where the need for cybersecurity solutions and awareness on cyber threats is immensely required. Therefore, forums like AVAR, play a pivotal role in bringing the cybersecurity industry together to brainstorm on the complexities of the threat landscape and discuss the way forward to deal with these."

Alliance with Cert-In

Cert-In is the national nodal agency from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur in the country. Industry players from the Indian cyber community are its members.

Commenting on the event, Dr Sanjay Bahl, Director General, CERT-In, said, "AVAR is an important technology platform to bring the global

cybersecurity industry together to discuss and brainstorm on the technical way forward to deal with the evolving threat landscape. We are glad that AVAR 2018 is being hosted in India by K7 Computing, an Indian company. This highlights the important role that the industry is playing in the country to prevent cyber security incidents and build trust in ICT infrastructure for citizens at large. We extend our support to K7 Computing and congratulate them on taking this ownership on behalf of the entire Indian cybersecurity industry."

K7 Computing is the only Indian cybersecurity company manufacturing completely indigenised products, thus completely adhering to the MeitY notification, which emphasises on promoting domestically manufactured/produced cyber security products.

K7 has also established its global leadership in the anti-malware and security industry as per the 2018 AV-Comparatives Performance Report. The company has consistently secured the lowest system impact scores among international players, according to global reports. AV-Comparatives is an Austria-based independent and internationally acclaimed testing organisation. In these reports, K7 Total Security; K7 Computing's flagship product have been leading on various parameters consistently.

Research findings

Many research reports and findings were shared by researchers and cybersecurity experts at AVAR. One of the key findings was the 'New Android Denial of Service Vulnerability'. K7 researchers explained how the ADB (Android Debug Bridge), a tool used to set or modify Android phone's authentication PIN or pattern, can be leveraged by attackers to lock users out of their own phones without their knowledge.

Exploitation of this vulnerability via ADB, which had already been disclosed to Google, was demonstrated live, rendering a smartphone inaccessible by modifying its device security settings.

Partnership with PolySwarm

K7 Computing's partnership with PolySwarm was another big announcement at the event. PolySwarm is the first decentralised threat intelligence marketplace to further advance its ecosystem of quality malintent detection where K7 Computing will integrate its malware detection engine into PolySwarm's network.

Speaking about this alliance, Ben Schmidt, CSO, Developer, Co-founder of PolySwarm, said, "We are very excited to have K7 Computing join the growing network of PolySwarm. PolySwarm continues to expand its open and crowdsourced ecosystem with new anti-malware engines. We help them in detecting threats and accessing a humongous stream of malware samples to enhance their products."

The company has also recently announced a strategic repositioning and expansion of its enterprise security business. It has launched new security solutions for business, redefining the company's growth trajectory in the global enterprise IT security market.

In the future

K7 Computing is looking beyond computing devices in the future and is focusing on enhanced security for IoT and cloud services. According to Kesavardhanan, the use of artificial intelligence-based technologies such as Machine Learning based on big data



will continue at great pace, along with threat intelligence, spreading to being used at various security protection layers - endpoint, network, devices, and containers and on the cloud.

"We are looking at a model where we can cover the existing technologies with our security layers to monitor and provide alerts to enterprises. Malicious crypto-miners will continue to expand into new types of devices such as those in Internet of Things (routers, smart TVs, smart washing machines, smart cars, etc), further increasing their footprint on different operating systems (Mac, Linux, Android) and platforms such as cloud services," he added.

Since many enterprises are shifting their infrastructure to cloud-based platforms, i.e. data centers, the attackers will intend to target these platforms at an increasing rate with

social engineering and vulnerabilities most likely being the starting points for these attacks.

"Next year will also see more countries take the initiative to introduce stringent data-privacy regulations similar to GDPR, which would make it mandatory for companies to maintain detailed records of their IT infrastructure and disclose any breaches within designated timeframes," explained Kesavardhanan.

K7 Computing's K7 Academy bridges the skills gap in the Indian cybersecurity space. The academy offers students technical, hands-on, domain-focused and behavioural learning modules. Offering a combination of classroom and on-the-job training, the courses are designed by security researchers and experts at K7 Computing.

LEVERAGING A ROBUST PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

Reliance ADA Group founded Unlimit as the first comprehensive IoT offering for the Indian market. **Jürgen Hase**, CEO, Unlimit, highlights how the company has built an ecosystem of more than 400 partners and why he considers a good channel partner to be a co-creator, co-innovator, and sometimes a co-investor for startups

By Sudipta Dev

Unlimit, the only dedicated IoT business unit in India, was launched in 2016. It is spearheaded by Jürgen Hase, CEO and his team who have an in-depth knowledge of the Indian market. The company has a wide ranging end-to-end IoT offering. "In just two years we have built the first comprehensive IoT offering for the Indian market, right from managed connectivity to device management and application platform to any form of analytics. Unlimit has the best-in-class partner ecosystem for the India market," says Hase.

Unlimit has successfully built an ecosystem of over 400 partners, comprising of domain experts, technology evangelist, and system integrators. "End-to-end IoT based products and solutions not only require extensive consultancy and customised solutioning, but also sector specific devices and sensors. We leverage our partner network and work on a sell-through model for the same. Traditional distribution networks will not work in this case," points out Hase, adding that some of the marketing interventions for the channel comprises of trade marketing, which includes incentivising and running contest for partners; BTL campaigns for launching products/solutions at partners end.

Hase believes that for any startup, expansion of knowledge resources and sector specific hardware requirements will always pose challenges during the growth phase. The right channel



partner's existing network can play an important role in that case. "With the right set of partners, we can leverage their sales and distribution network as well as extensive range of hardware devices and sensors to help us navigate and expand our company to the next level. Partners' continuous engagement with the market in their specific domain provides good market insights that can be mutually beneficial for both companies to solve customer pain points and expand the respective business," he asserts, reminding that a good channel partner should be treated as a valuable co-creator, co-innovator and in certain cases, a co-investor.

The solutions and services offered by Unlimit are – Unlimit Control: An IoT platform for managed connectivity; Unlimit Enablement allows enterprises and consumers to deploy and integrate a variety of IoT sensors and devices over the wireless network; Unlimit Insights

helps anticipate and pre-empt disruptions, detect liabilities and mitigate risk. "The solution is all about designing IoT use cases for various industries in the Indian market. Unlimit Insights based use cases provide device registration, IoT rules, advanced analytics, visualisation, reports and cognitive capabilities," mentions Hase.

Future plans

Speaking about the future plans in terms of channel marketing strategy, Hase remarks, "We are convinced that the current IoT scenario presents the largest opportunity for the channel. Many of the services will be high-margin and will require a specialised skill set. The permutations and combinations of industry, geography, customer size and line of business will almost eliminate the commoditisation that has taken over the mainstream VAR business."

The company is looking for channel partners with an ability to understand this intersection of micro markets. They will be uniquely positioned to work on these opportunities on a national scale and perhaps globally. "Our partner choice will not be too small for an established vendor to take notice or get distracted, but large, enough in revenue and profit to drive entirely new businesses," he states.

Going forward, the company will further deepen its platform capabilities by offering Unlimit Consult, Unlimit Secure, and Unlimit Data. The focus verticals will be expanded according to the market requirements.

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Iris Computers Ltd.
A-155, Road No 4, Mahipalpur, New Delhi 110037
Tel.: 011-26782505, Fax.: 011-26782510, 11

¹ Based on Dell internal analysis, August 2017.