Robert James Sewell, Head, Technology Solutions Group, Aircel

Robert James Sewell, head of Aircel's technology solutions group, is amazed at India's cultural and economic diversity. According to him, it is this diversity that makes India one of the fastest growing telecom markets in the world and a unique and challenging place to operate in.

Sewell joined Aircel in 2011 and is responsible for the architecture and planning of its IT infrastructure. "I am responsible for meeting Aircel's internal IT needs as well as providing and operating the IT infrastructure required for customer support. On the network architecture and planning side, I spearhead network strategy, coverage and building."

Sewell believes that IT plays a major role in bringing in innovation at the minimum possible cost. "However, the challenge is to keep pace with customer demands, technological innovations and regulatory changes, and continue to be the most competitive in the market."

According to Sewell, a key technology trend in India is the increasing demand for data. "The demand for data is going to continue for another decade in the country. Also, the industry is moving towards centralisation," he comments. Sewell notes that devices are no longer meant for just making voice calls, they are evolving and the Indian market will see more affordable smartphones.

Sewell describes his management style as inclusive. He says, "I believe in asking questions and encouraging people to come up with ideas and innovations. I like sourcing ideas from people." According to Sewell, as a manager his biggest strength is his ability to make sense out of the data and ideas before him. Moreover, he says that he has never shied away from getting his hands dirty, while addressing a problem.

Sewell, who has a bachelor's degree in electronic engineering and in science (math and computing) from the University of Western Australia, wanted to be an engineer. He got into the telecom sector more by chance. He says, "I began my career with Telstra Australia, a leading provider of mobile phones and broadband, simply because I wanted to stay in Melbourne and the company by virtue of being based out of Melbourne, gave me this opportunity."

Sewell spent 17 years at Telstra before moving to India to join Aircel. He says, "Having spent such a long time at one place makes one familiar and comfortable with the company's culture. The decision to move on poses a number of cultural and organisational challenges. However, it also brings along the excitement to experience new things."

Sewell loves reading and travelling. He immensely enjoyed a recent trip to Kerala and plans to visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar soon.