

INTERVIEW

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Robert J. Sewell - Head, Technology Solutions Group, Aircel, discusses with KTP Radhika how IT helps in addressing business challenges of the company and the advantages of big data and cloud in the telecom sector.

“Telecom as a sector is heavily technology reliant”

How does big data help telecom sector?

With the huge consumer data being generated (structured & non structured) every moment, there's a need for near real-time data analysis with 360 degree view, generating actionable analytics and on-the-fly call to action to impact our business. If done so, this information becomes extremely relevant in order to gain a competitive advantage. This data growth, complemented by exponential increase in smartphone penetration and machine to machine (M2M) communication can help the telecom sector to lower it's operating costs and grow revenues. Aircel has deployed big data warehouse with new analytical tool and is progressive building capability for big data analytics.

How is cloud computing revolutionizing telecom sector? Do you use cloud technology?

At Aircel, we believe that cloud computing as a technology has immense potential and shall see its uptake increase in the future. Aircel currently is using largely pre-cloud solutions but cloud computing is expected to reshape the telecommunications sector and progressively, our own architecture.

Telecom is a tightly- regulated sector. How does IT help keep pace with dynamic norms at Aircel?

Telecom as a sector is heavily technology reliant. As we understand that technology is fast evolving, therefore we need to have strong systems to ensure everything is compliant as per the norms laid by the regulators. The regulations need to enable easy and quick technology adoption by end users.

At Aircel, we are ensuring that we maintain standards and offer quality experience to our customers. We have a centralized IT landscape which has been planned on the basis of standard enhanced telecom operations map (ETOM) compliant framework and have a service oriented architecture (SOA) evolution strategy, so dynamic changes are affected on a single centralized system at rational pace and this architecture helps us to move rapidly.

Aircel has one of the fastest 2G expansion/3G roll outs in the Indian telecom



What are Aircel's plans for broadband wireless access (BWA) and 4G roll-out? What is your back-haul strategy for the same?

Aircel has one of the largest investments in BWA spectrum demonstrating our commitment towards delivering services to our customers. Delivering a successful 4G experience requires a whole ecosystem in place including handsets, new optic fiber networks as well as the new electronics at sites. We are preparing for a right-time to launch 4G services.

space supported by our state of the art technology. The last mile connectivity that Aircel is able to provide is by using the right kind of technology.

Being a telecom operator, the network being provided to the end customer should be relevant and technology plays a major role in its provision as well as in its maintenance of quality. The management also understands that IT is no longer just a support function but its critical for the business success. Technology has contributed significantly to drive value based results reflecting in top line revenue growth and helps us to position ourselves as a key data player in the market. As a result, we have brought to the market many innovative products and services in the recent times like mobile money, pocket Internet games, one nation, one rate amongst others.

What are the business challenges you face and how can IT help in addressing it?

With the fast changing consumer preferences, needs and dynamic industry norms, today the telecom sector is faced with challenges and IT has the ability to help overcome them. Unprecedented data traffic growth and scaling up of network to meet this rise in demand, voice market's saturation, continuously improving our customers' experience, reducing operational costs, ensuring compliance with regulations and showing return on investment all keep us busy.

Moreover, as technologists we are required to simplify the use of IT for our customers so that they are able adapt it seamlessly. Technology's affordability and accessibility has a significant contribution in it's adoption.

To address these issues, it is absolutely imperative to have an alignment between the business and IT and such an alignment must pervade every decision we make as technologists. Within Aircel, IT helps to increase productivity and workforce's efficiency. Business intelligence tools, integrated CRM and service delivery platforms support business strategy, VAS and data delivery enable us to enhance the customer experience.

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