Manage customer value across the whole lifecycle with telecoms data analytics

As communications service providers (CSPs) start to utilise big data more effectively, it's analytics capabilities that are driving cross-sell and upsell opportunities. Here, Amit Sanyal, the business head for Consumer Value Solutions at Mahindra Comviva talks to Sandra O'Boyle, a senior analyst at Heavy Reading about its vision for enabling CSP customers with big data analytics

Sandra O'Boyle: Please can you provide some background on Mahindra Comviva?

Amit Sanyal: Mahindra Comviva was founded in 1999, so we are 17 years old and, as a subsidiary of Tech Mahindra, part of the US$17.8 billion Mahindra Group. At Mahindra Comvia, we focus on mobility solutions that span digital financial services, customer value management, messaging and broadband, digital lifestyle services and managed value-added services (VAS). We are present in over 90 countries worldwide and work with nearly all the tier one communications service providers (CSPs).

Every CSP we speak to is challenged with increasing customer revenue, improving the customer experience – and big data analytics enables that. We provide analytics-based software and solutions for example to manage customer value across the lifecycle to improve average revenue per user (ARPU), retention and customer experience.

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SO: What demands are you seeing for analytics in the mature European market?

AS: We are seeing demand for actionable insight-based customer value management, in other words, managing the customer in a more data-driven personalised and insightful way. Managing the customer lifecycle helps CSPs to increase average revenue per user (ARPU), improve loyalty and customer experience by executing contextual and targeted marketing campaigns.

We also recognise significant similarities between CSPs in emerging mobile markets or in mature mobile markets such as Europe. Regardless of geography, customers are increasingly interacting with their CSP through IVR, web, app and social channels and thus generating huge amounts of structured as well as unstructured data. This provides the CSP with the opportunity to increase revenue and improve customer experience and loyalty by better understanding their preferences and behaviour. ▶

Mahindra Comviva's MobiLytix suite is a big data mobile analytics platform that can manage different parts of the telecoms customer lifecycle irrespective of whether the customer is prepaid or postpaid.

The platform has different modules to manage the customer lifecycle, such as multi-channel campaign management, real-time marketing, predictive and prescriptive analytics, loyalty and digital care solutions.

Real-time personalised marketing is in the highest demand not just in Europe, but globally. The sheer volume and variety of data being generated across the telecoms ecosystem and the number of attributes, interactions and touch points are ripe for big data analytics. Marketing coupled with data analytics addresses customer wants at the time of their need by understanding patterns in data.

Being able to analyse customer interaction data, whether it's SMS, email or digital, in real-time and take the most relevant marketing decision right at that moment is a key requirement.

SO: How do you sell the value of MobiLytix to operators?

AS: What we provide is the big data analytics-driven customer value management based on actionable insights. In short, we sell software/analytical models to solve practical problems such as managing and monetising a diverse customer base that is moving to a digital world. CSPs are not looking to invest in doing all of those themselves as they focus more on their core competencies and hence, are looking at software solutions with third parties.

The value can be measured in two parts. First the value it adds to the business in terms of revenues, ARPU growth, and reducing churn rates. The second is how much value does it add in terms of reducing support overheads, for example trying to do this in-house vs. buying a proven package from us.

The actual business key performance indicators (KPIs) vary from region to region and CSP to CSP. What is common across all service providers is that the business value for customer data analytics is all about the incremental revenue that the solution adds. How much more does this add to the bottom line that we do not currently make today?

SO: How is MobiLytix different from competitor offers?

AS: We cover the entire customer lifecycle, compared to other competitors that may focus just on some aspect of the lifecycle and not the whole lifecycle. MobiLytix is one common suite that includes loyalty, campaign and analytics packages.

Mahindra Comviva is a company which has customer centricity as its key focus area driving everything from innovations to support and delivery to after sales support. This is in line with the wider Mahindra group DNA.

And last but not the least, usability, we hear from customers and prospects that most of the solutions out there are too technical and require huge efforts to work on them. If we are selling a real-time marketing management package to the business department, the software has to be easy to operate. It has to be easy for the business users to select models, run multiple campaigns, so we have designed MobiLytix to be easy to use with an intuitive interface.

SO: What is next for Mahindra Comviva and MobiLytix?

AS: Most of our efforts in big data and analytics are about the consumer side – how can CSPs improve targeting and personalisation. We see demand for digital channels based solutions growing as digital channels replace traditional interaction channels.

We also see ourselves as pioneers in the retail and channel space where you have people loading prepaid, renewing contracts and performing many other tasks. These channels are under-explored in terms of revenue potential. Our future plan is to generate cross-sell and upsell opportunities at the point of sale and improve the profitability of channel partners. How do we maximise the opportunity if a customer comes in to recharge five dollars – why not ten dollars? Our retailer management suite can recommend offers at time of purchase based on looking at customer locations, usage patterns and other factors.

Machine learning algorithms and predictive analytics and automation are areas where we will be deeply involved in the coming months. How do we make customer base management systems self-learn, understand and predict customer behaviour? How can we look at consumer behavior in real time and probable sets of outcomes for marketing teams?

SO: What final words of advice do you have for operators when it comes to customer analytics solutions?

AS: Be clear about the use cases before you get into analytics and consider that big data analytics is not always relevant, it depends on the use case and business problems and we are still at a nascent stage.

Consider interoperability and how easy it is to integrate customer value management solutions with existing legacy systems. Also, consider delivery timelines and whether the software supports a model with low total cost of ownership (TCO) and faster go to market. When it comes to choosing a software provider, trust is a key factor. Are they prepared to go the extra mile whether it's ensuring the software is integrated and supports the use cases or being available to train the marketing and IT teams?

Mahindra Comviva is committed to gaining customers' trust, by focusing strongly on quality and by meeting the expectations of the service providers by delivering world class products and solutions, developed using well defined processes and the best available technology. ■

Amit Sanyal:
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