

The CEO Magazine

A Magazine for Business Leaders & Decision Makers



RNI No. DELENG18953

India | www.theceo.in | Special Edition | November 2016



COMPANIES OF THE YEAR

Special Edition

2016

MANORANJAN
MOHAPATRA
CEO
Mahindra Comviva

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COMVIVA

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Stay Relevant,
Touch People's Lives





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Ayanangsha Maitra • The CEO Magazine

There is a tectonic shift happening in the area of mobile technologies. Beside text, voice and camera, phones are now incorporating myriad features like payments, location, loyalty etc. Following China, India crested one billion mobile users mark in this year. Still there are millions of people who don't have access to cell phone or banking.

Since past seventeen years, Mahindra Comviva has been focusing on enabling digital transformation in mobile analytics and related technologies that empower people. The company's solutions and services are aligned with strategic technology trends to enable telecom operators to provide value added services to their customers.

Mahindra Comviva is a well-known global player with a deep understanding of the markets as it has clients all over the world. With offices and operations in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America, Mahindra Comviva offers support to over hundred clients worldwide. The firm works with global group operators like Vodafone, Airtel, Orange, MTN etc. In spite of its global presence the company acts local.

Mahindra Comviva's expertise in the field of Mobile Financial Services, Mobile Content, Mobile Analytics and Mobile Messaging, guarantees to improve telecom operator's processes and businesses in line with all relevant standards. New Delhi based Mahindra Comviva has offices in the business hubs of many countries like Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, UK and France. The company expanded its footprint in the Middle East with the opening of its office in Dubai. In Nigeria and Kenya, the company has also created a strong base. Nearly forty five percent of their total revenue comes from Africa, whereas the Indian market brings twenty percent.

As an initiative of Bharti Group (Bharti Telesoft), Mahindra Comviva made a humble start seventeen years back. By the end of 2012 Bharti Group along with other VCs offloaded 60 % of the equity to Tech Mahindra. It continues to be a joint venture between Tech Mahindra and Bharti where Tech Mahindra holds the majority control.

In a conversation with *The CEO Magazine*, **Manoranjan 'Mao' Mohapatra**, CEO of Mahindra Comviva said, "We are a subsidiary of Tech Mahindra. But we have complete operational independence to innovate and engage with customers in our chosen technologies and market place. I've been here for past eight years and we are growing at an average of twenty percent every year. The company has filed over 52 patents, out of which 40 patents were filed in the last 5 years. We have received several prestigious awards for innovation, including GSMA Global Mobile Awards, Global Telecoms Business Innovation Awards, AfricaCom Awards, Meffys 2013 Awards, Aegis Graham Bell Awards, Frost & Sullivan - India ICT Awards, Golden Peacock Innovation Award etc. to name a few."

Mahindra Comviva's global headcount is over two thousand employees. Eighty percent of them are based in India. Some of these employees are involved in deliveries across the globe. The current international headcount is nearly three hundred and fifty.

Commenting on company's culture Mao asserted, "It is very hard to exist in this market without innovation. We have innovation at the heart of our business strategy and we have positioned ourselves as a leader in digital solutions with the vision to impact 'The Business of Tomorrows'. We encourage our employees to innovate. We also encourage them to make mistakes. Unless you make mistakes you cannot innovate. Failure is the only way to succeed. We have a history of succeeding through failures. Internal failures are not seen as failure of the individual, team, department or organization. It's seen as eliminating one more reason of not succeeding."

In the combination of these insights, lies the origin of Mahindra Comviva's vision and future strategic direction.



Mao's career has been dedicated to the development and deployment of innovative software communications solutions in rapidly growing markets and transforming high potential businesses into true world-beating organizations. His track record for enabling innovation, his deep knowledge of telecom related technology and his wealth of experience in a range of operational and marketing roles provide a strong leadership base from which to enhance Mahindra Comviva's position as the leading provider of integrated VAS solutions in emerging markets globally.

Electronics and Electrical Engineering graduate (from BITS Pilani) Mao began his career with Center for Development of Telematics (CDOT), where he made a significant contribution to research and development in telecom switching. Thereafter he moved to Hughes.

Prior to joining Mahindra Comviva, Mao was President and COO at Aricent, where he enjoyed a fifteen year career and was instrumental in



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building the company from a relative start-up to a globally recognized brand, with over US\$ 300 million in revenues. At Aricent, Mao led teams in the areas of R&D, product management, operations, and sales and marketing, gaining hands-on experience and in-depth knowledge of the software and communications industries and honing his leadership talent.

Mao has been recognized with prestigious 'Distinguished Fellow' award by The Institute of Directors (IOD) in the year 2012 and in 2013. He was named "India's Top 20 CEO 2013" by Haryana IT, Telecom, and Enabled industries Confederation (HITEC) India for spearheading the company's growth as an industry leader and for setting benchmarks in the mobile VAS industry. Mao has also been featured amongst top 6 'Movers and Shakers' in the payments industry globally by Juniper Research in 2016.



can understand customer behavior, consumption and preferences.

The company's brainchild mobiquity® Wallet empowers banks, operators, financial institutions and merchants to adopt a digital strategy suited to their markets and gives them an easy to use, mobile secure, feature rich digital wallet solution offering for both remote and proximity payments. On the other hand, mobiquity® Money not only empowers unbanked and the under-banked consumers to meet their financial needs, it also empowers them with access to a full range of advanced financial services.

Do you think that Digital India will have a significant effect? TCM asked Mr. Mohapatra.

"Yes, it will. This Digitization is a highly transformational initiative. It will increase productivity without increasing cost. At the end of the day, it's going to help us to reduce effort and achieve more. I need not spend half my day to pay taxes. It will also help to increase the GDP. But this takes time. We will not be able to see the impact immediately. But the impact will definitely be visible few years down the line."

"Let me give you an example. Seven years ago, it took a long time to get a new passport or renew an expired passport. It was an extremely painful process. Now we can do it easily. We

don't have to take a day off.

Earlier, I had to stop my car for paying toll taxes in different locations. Today we don't have to stop anywhere. We can pay toll taxes online. So is the process of online passport application," added Mr. Mohapatra.

By combining extensive technology acumen with industry knowledge, Mahindra Comviva strives to stay relevant in today's highly competitive markets. We have a deep focus in strategy and implementations. The acquisition of Bengaluru based Jataayu and ATS in Argentina were strategic and future focused. Mahindra Comviva also has a startup factory with three-four new initiatives which are headed by young CEOs. Witnessing the growth and success of Mahindra Comviva in the mobile financial space the company plans to roll out an international remittance service called TerraPay globally and another financial inclusion service called Zoto in Nigeria. The company is now moving towards its aim to touch people's lives especially those who do not have access to banking services by providing new and fresh innovative solutions. Another initiative called PalmLeaf significantly improves learning & engagement through smarter mobile driven solutions that meet changing lifestyle needs.

“My personal involvement is very high in this organization. I'm very passionate about what I do. I see this organization as an extension of my home.” he stated.

He oversees all the key functions including Product Management, Customer Support, Implementation and Delivery, Business Management and Sales. Under the aegis of Mao, two different teams, called Customization and R&D, serve the company's engineering unit. While the Customization team looks after customization, the R&D Team strives to constantly innovate to stay relevant in today's dynamic world.

Mahindra Comviva generates revenue through its mobile financial, data analytics, digital content, messaging & broadband solutions as well as managed VAS services. With the help of these solutions, the telcos