

# Operators need to re-think strategies

MCommerce, MHealth, social networking, video streaming, enterprise VAS, and location-based services are some of the game changers for the industry

**T**he surge in information has brought about a conversion in the consumer's behavior and preferences. It is also transforming the telecom industry by enabling personalized, intuitive and customized solutions that match consumer needs better than traditional offerings. Personal use of mobility is already visible with people, especially youth relying on mobile devices as their primary communication tool. Increased dependence on mobile phones has led to consumers expecting more from their service providers and fulfilling these consumer expectations has become an imperative task for Mobile Value Added Services (MVAS) industry's growth.

The key challenges faced by MVAS providers have been customization and localization of content combined with the increasing dependence on the internet speed accessible to the consumers on their handsets. Matter of fact is that such a speed is not necessarily determined by network, but also dependent on the handsets. People in India typically go for low cost handsets despite the presence of smartphones which affects the entire Mobile VAS experience. And for the consumers who do own smartphones, affordability of data services is a challenge. Most importantly, a fair and balanced revenue sharing model is amiss and is need of the hour for the growth of the Mobile VAS providers.

Mobile VAS is moving from pure entertainment services to draw in need-based services around education, governance, health and similar areas. This transition creates challenges as well as new opportunities for business.

Some of the key trends for 2014-2015 would be the continued focus and dependence on interactive communication



among end users. MCommerce, MHealth, social networking, video streaming, enterprise VAS, and location-based services are some of the game changers for the industry. A critical factor for growth will be the aggressive demand for smartphones. The additional capabilities in the hands of users will drive MVAS.

The emergence of over-the-top (OTT) players and its popularity amongst the consumers is a trend of immense interest. The advent of these companies has forced operators to rethink their strategies and enhance their portfolios to include internet-based services. However, revenue from these is yet to catch up with that of voice-based services.

Crux of the matter is that the VAS industry has evolved from predominantly a Short Messaging Service (SMS) and Caller Ring Back Tone (CRBT) service to an industry that provides solutions in the areas of core network infrastructure, messaging nodes with intelligence, mobile financial

solutions, among others. The transformation story is also against the background where VAS was moving from pure entertainment services to draw in need-based services around education, governance, health and similar areas. 'Mobile' has positioned itself as a true ubiquitous solution and with the ever growing need for convergence in technology, it is apt for all of us to reconsider the industry from VAS to mobility solutions providers that transform lives; what each one of us are actually striving to create in this era.

The growth of the industry is purely based on the capability of an organization to extensively offer and deliver mobility solutions which not only enhance customer experience but also provide day-to-day cost benefits. It is thus imperative to focus on providing integrated solutions which cater to the entire ecosystem.

It is aptly said that change is the only constant and even amongst such dynamic changes, the MVAS industry is here to stay despite challenges. Having said that, going forward, companies will need to focus on analytics driven personalized services for the consumers. 🌟



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