

A CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

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ADVERTORIAL & PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

YASMIN TAJ

In spite of such immense growth, there are still challenges the telecom industry faces, and there are new frontiers that have to be conquered. The ET Telecom Awards 2013 presented by Global Group, brought together some top industry experts of the

900 million. An offshoot of this telecommunication growth has been empowerment for the people; millions of citizens can now electronically access services and information easily and effectively. Slowly but surely, the telecommunication age in India is one of an information and knowledge revolution at the grassroots level. India's telecom

Some top industry experts of the telecom sector discuss all the challenges faced by the telecom sector and the future of connecting India

Global Master Class on 'Connect India - From Evolution to Revolution'



From left: Sandeep Girotra, head of India region, Nokia Solutions & Networks; Chris Houghton, head of region, Ericsson India; Manvi Dhillion, ET Now; RK Upadhyay, chairman & managing director, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd and Prashant Singhal, partner, Assurance, Telecom sector leader - EY (India)

Discussing the same, Prashant Singhal, partner, Assurance, Telecom sector leader - EY (India) explained, "I think it is the spectrum which is missing or the spectrum is just too expensive. We have seen that in all the auctions that have happened. The clarity on the policy of auction does not exist. Five megahertz spectrum or 22 billion dollars has been paid by the industry about three years ago and the industry is in a debt burden, so I really don't know how the people are going to invest. Though I completely agree that we are at early stages of data adaption, but we must understand that we have already got 900 subscribers which could actually latch on to data if people

Girotra, there are several such elements. "Our industry is highly dependent on a supportive regulatory environment. So, there are many things for which regulatory support is required for this industry to regain back its vibrancy where it was 3-4 years ago. However, we do see that in the last couple years, the regulatory environment is starting to move in a certain direction which can be termed as positive."

It is, however, equally vital that data services also witness commensurate growth. While the policy tasks the sector with growth in broadband services, the sector itself needs to also look at improving the availability and quality of the data service connectivity. Both are closely related, in fact, they are two sides of the same coin. With one small difference that can play a critical role in India. Smartphone penetration, which is critically dependant upon data connectivity, can be the true harbinger of revolution in India because it allows access to information, knowledge and services electronically, via the phone handset, i.e. single point infrastructure investment by the consumer. Besides which, the telecom sector also needs to look at new sources for growth as revenue based purely on increase in voice or communication device users slows down as the tele-density reaches near saturation levels. Besides which globally, data-users tend to result in higher than average revenue per user for the telecom service providers than merely voice users. All in all, data services may be the key growth point for both, users and service providers.

telecom sector to discuss all the challenges and the future of connecting India. The panelists invited for the discussion were: Sandeep Girotra, head of India region, Nokia Solutions & Networks; Chris Houghton, head of region, Ericsson India; RK Upadhyay, chairman & managing director, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd; and Prashant Singhal, partner, Assurance, Telecom sector leader - EY (India). The discussion was moderated by Manvi Dhillion, senior editor, ET Now.

India has gone from a communications backwater to become the second largest and most vibrant mobile market on the planet. The overall mobile subscriber base in India is almost

services have grown by leaps and bounds.

The fly in the ointment, however, is the connectivity penetration; in both, broadband connectivity and data services. India currently has just around 30 million wireline broadband subscribers and approximately 25 million wireless Broadband (3G) data subscribers. Clearly, our broadband and data connectivity is lagging behind our communications boom.

Kicking off the discussion Dhillion asked, "So, what is the new frontier of communications? The answer is simple - Data. About 900 million mobile phone subscribers, but just a very small fraction of that number are data consumers. So, are we on the

verge of a data explosion? Or do we have some key ingredients missing which is why the data story isn't keeping pace with voice?"

Answering this question, Sandeep Girotra, head of India region, Nokia Solutions & Networks said that these are phases which come and go.



"When we look at the data consumption in India over the last couple of years, it has been growing at the same pace at which the voice was growing in India about 8-9 years ago. So,

therefore, this is a phase and India is as hungry about data consumption as any other part in the world is. So, just wait."

Though broadband has been promising, its growth has been slow in India. In fact India has one of the lowest broadband subscriber penetration rates in Asia. With the explosive growth being witnessed in the smart phone segment, and the technological advancement which has already brought us the 4G phone, it is equally important that data service availability keep pace with the mobile handset user growth. Again, like the broadband story, here too that is not the case. The current emphasis, by the policy makers is on broadband

penetration in India.

Talking about the ingredients that are going to really propel the data consumption story in India, Chris Houghton, head of region, Ericsson India expressed, "I think it is strictly because of the affordability of smartphone devices in India. Over time, they will become much more affordable in India and then we

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

will see a big leap as we have seen in other countries all over the world."

An essential need for data explosion in India is abundant and affordable spectrum, and that is what is widely missing.

were to invest, but where is the money to invest."

So, is data really the biggest driver for future revenue growth for the telecom industry? According to RK Upadhyay, chairman & managing director, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, "Yes it is. We have already seen the voice revenue reaching a stage of saturation. We have also seen that there has been a huge increase in data usage in recent months. Therefore, there are ample indications that future revenues to every telecom operator would come from data, though there are a few challenges that need to be overcome."

What are the key elements for a conducive regulatory environment? According to

India is as hungry about data consumption as any other part in the world is

SANDEEP GIROTRA
head of India region, Nokia Solutions & Networks



Future revenues to every telecom operator would come from data

RK UPADHYAY
chairman & managing director, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd



Once, smartphone devices in India become more affordable, data consumption will see a big leap

CHRIS HOUGHTON
head of region, Ericsson India



We have got 900 subscribers which could actually latch on to data if people were to invest

PRASHANT SINGHAL
partner, Assurance, Telecom sector leader - EY (India)



Navanit Narayan, chief service delivery officer, Idea Cellular Limited, receiving the award for Innovative Product - Enterprise category from Chris Houghton, head of region, Ericsson India and Arunabh Das Sharma, president, Bennett, Coleman & Co Ltd

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - ENTERPRISE

Idea Cellular Ltd - Idea Smart Gas Solution
An Oil PSU's logistical struggle; a consumer's nightmare; and a hoarder's dream project - the LPG Booking and Delivery system in India has been marred with several loop holes over the last many decades. In came the 'Idea Smart Gas Solution' which offered end-to-end solution to the Top Oil PSUs in India, enabling smooth booking to billing to delivery services, while getting rid of several distribution malpractices and offering convenience to over 50 million end customers!



Rahul Prakash, VP, Business (2nd from right) and Rajat Walia, VP, Strategic Projects (extreme right), iKen Solutions Pvt Ltd, receiving the award for Innovative Product - Telecom Software category

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - TELECOM SOFTWARE

iKen Solutions Pvt Ltd (an IIT Bombay research spin-off) - Mooga
Mooga is a platform that enables and delivers automated, integrated and operational intelligence. It uses Hybrid Artificial Intelligence techniques and analyses one entity at a time, that is on an N=1 basis. Their approach helps organisations to enable human, knowledge and data driven intelligence. Mooga is currently being used in telecom for consumer analytics - to offer each customer a holistic experience.

Here's a look at what makes the awardees of the third edition of the ET Telecom Awards winners in the truest sense

THE WINNING STREAK



PHOTOS: VINOD KUMAR



Mankesh Dadhwal, director - operations, Altruist Technologies Pvt Ltd, receiving the award for Innovative Product - VAS category

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - VAS

Altruist Technologies Pvt. Ltd. - Rozgar Sewa
Started with a clear objective of improving the earning potential of semi-skilled manpower, which in India is the largest but highly unorganized jobs market. Rozgar Sewa is a user friendly multilingual Mobile based voice product for blue collared "Job seekers" and "Job providers". The service works on the concept of bridging the gap between job seekers & employers by using the ubiquitous device "mobile".



Gaurav Dhawan, executive director (2nd from right) and Devendra Dhawan, managing director (extreme right), Clay Telecom, receiving the award for Innovative Product - Voice category from Sandeep Girotra, head of India region, NSN and R Sundar, director, The Times of India Group

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - VOICE

Clay Telecom - Clay Value Plus
Clay Telecom is a first-of-its-kind fusion product allowing unlimited call value with a prepaid amount for a traveller's market to help them stay in control while travelling abroad.



Sushill Jivarajka, co founder & chairman, OMC Power, receiving the award for Operational Excellence - Tower Development category from RK Upadhyay, CMD, BSNL and Ashok Sud, secretary General, AUSPI

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE - TOWER DEVELOPMENT

OMC Power - Micropower Plants
OMC extracts energy from renewable sources and uses it to power both mobile networks and rural communities. They call it Micropower - small-scale energy with local generation and distribution.



RK Bahuguna, chairman & managing director (2nd from left), RailTel Corporation of India Ltd, receiving the award for Trusted Carrier of the Year category

TRUSTED CARRIER OF THE YEAR

RailTel Corporation of India Ltd - National Long Distance (Voice & Data)
It aids to proliferate telecom services of high quality with reliable and affordable network available in all parts of the country, including in rural and remote areas. It serves as a neutral telecom operator for all strategic and social needs for bandwidth in the country.



Neelgandan PG, group director, R&D (extreme left); Rupinder Singh, director, Sales (2nd from left); and Dr Kumar N Sivaraman, CTO (centre), Tejas Networks Ltd, receiving the award for Innovative Product - OEM category

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - OEM

Tejas Networks Ltd - TJ1400 PTN
TJ1400 PTN is a data networking telecom product that enables new age data services like high speed Internet, VOIP, Video conferencing, IPTV and online gaming over an optical fiber infrastructure. It combines innovative packet capabilities with ease of operation, greater network resilience and software intelligence to provide a low capex and low opex networking backbone solution for telecom operators.

FIRST JURY



(L-R) Alok Shende, founder & director, Ascentius; Sunil Patil, director and faculty (telecom), Symbiosis Institute of Telecom Management; Ajay Upadhyay, chief operating officer, Percept Limited



(L-R) Sanjay Mandavkar, president & managing director, Corporate Finance, Yes Bank; Rajesh Jindal, chief operating officer, Travelguru; Dhiren Savla, CIO, VFS Global Services Pvt Ltd

SECOND JURY



(L-R) M Unnikrishnan, managing director & CEO, Thermax Group; Anil Khanna, managing director, Blue Dart Express; Sam Balsara, chairman and managing director, Madison World



(L-R) Sanjeev Chachondia, operating partner, New Silk Route Advisors; Anil Singhvi, chairman, Ican Investments Advisors; Shrinath Bolloju, group COO, Deutsche Bank, India



(L-R) Aruna Jayanthi, CEO, Capgemini India; Rahul Shukla, managing director, Head of Corporate Banking - City; Deepak Kumar Chatterjee, MD & CEO, SBI Funds Management Pvt Ltd; Ghyendra Nath Bajpai, chairman, Intuit Consulting Pvt Ltd

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

Process advisor and official tabulator for ET Telecom Awards 2013, Ernst & Young LLP sifted through over 130 entries in the form of case

studies in innovation and excellence. Data was gathered and validated with respect to the applications that were received, in accordance with

the pre-determined set of rules and regulations. All entries were then appraised by an independent jury who shortlisted the top

three entries in each category. A final jury then again reviewed the shortlisted entries and determined the winners.

ET TELECOM AWARDS 2013: CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

The third edition of The Economic Times Telecom Awards presented by the Global Group saw the who's who of the telecom industry recognise, appreciate, applaud and crown the best of the best from this ever-growing sector for their excellence

YASMIN TAJ

The third edition of The Economic Times Telecom Awards presented by the Global Group was held in a scintillating ceremony on September 6, 2013 at the Taj Palace, New Delhi and was attended by some of the most noted and eminent telecom personalities and industry people. These awards are an ultimate celebration of excellence and benchmark for the higher standards of innovation in the extremely competitive business of telecom.

The Indian telecom sector has registered phenomenal growth during the past few years and has emerged as the second largest network in the world. Telecommunications has changed the landscape of India. Since the early 1990s we have seen communications in India grow from around a few million land phones to reach a significant majority (75%) of the country's 1.2 billion people.

Today, with a mobile phone subscriber base of around 900 million and a mobile services market that is expected to touch Rs 1200 billion in 2013, the Indian telecom industry has truly championed a low cost wireless revolution. This has been possible due to the constant efforts and innovation that has been led by the stakeholders in the telecom industry. The ET Telecom Awards presented by the Global Group presents a credible platform that truly honours the primary stakeholders in the telecom sector who have ventured into the unknown and have created products and

services which are both innovative and competitive. The awards recognise, appreciate, applaud and crown the best of the best from India's telecom industry.

Setting the tone for the evening, Arunabh Das Sharma, president, Bennett, Coleman & Co Ltd expressed, "We started this award to celebrate excellence and set benchmarks for higher standards of innovation in what at best can be described as a chaotic marketplace as far as

telecom is concerned. What we all do know is that the telecom industry has witnessed absolutely unparalleled growth. The figures are staggering. Most importantly, over the last few years, telecom has really been the poster boy that has almost mirrored and become a proxy for India's growth. So, whenever, people would talk about India's growth story, telecom would be one of the industries that would always be mentioned as a success and because of that success, India's

growth story has come about. Having said that, it has faced its challenges in the past few years. Some of those challenges have been regulatory; some have been hyper-competitiveness; and some

have been the policies the government, etc. have set. And therefore, I think it is time where the industry is facing some unique challenges, but it can only be a sustainable industry when regulators and operators and infrastructure providers come together and have a discussion in terms of how this industry can be made sustainable and how this industry can continue to grow because this is something that is in the best interest of all of us, not just people of this industry, but also people outside who have seen their lives literally transform by using mobile telephony. So, as India's largest business daily, it behoves us to create such platforms where we are able to bring together multifarious groups and really come together with a conversation that would really make sense for the industry."

A total of 16 awards were given away during the course of the evening. An advisory council comprising some of

the most prominent voices of the telecom industry guided the development of the awards agenda with valuable insights on the award categories, event format and jury composition. The evening did not only honour innovators and geniuses of the industry, it also held a thought-provoking session on how the industry should prepare to face challenges and move forward. The Global Master Class was the highlight of the evening that had some of the best minds in the telephony sector brainstorming what are some of the areas that will create sustainability for this industry.

Das Sharma further shared, "We also tried to look at honouring the truly innovative policies, programmes, campaigns, etc. that this industry puts together. This industry is one of the biggest consumer products because it touches the lives of 900 million people. So, it is here to honour all these people, the activities they do, their endeavours and really give them a pat on their back for services well rendered for their companies as well as for the industry in general."

The awards ceremony was attended by an audience of more than 200 people and engaged and entertained the participants with plenty of insights for the road that lies ahead for the telecom sector.



WINNERS OF PUBLIC POLL CAMPAIGN

As part of the ET Telecom Awards 2013, six lucky winners were chosen for participating in the public poll campaign, which was conducted nationally, with the use of social media. We would like to congratulate the winners and thank all the participants for their enthusiastic participation. The 6 lucky winners of Tablet Pcs are:

- Amit Sarda - UP
- Bheema Bhat - Karnataka
- Sanni Kumar - UP
- Anita Jagdale - Maharashtra
- Sanjeev Sethi - Chhattisgarh
- Omprakash Kanoongo - MP



Catch the coverage of the ET Telecom Awards 2013 on ET Now on September 28, 2013, Saturday at 4:00 pm and repeat telecast on September 29, 2013, Sunday at 4:30 pm



ARUNABH DAS SHARMA
president, Bennett, Coleman and Co Ltd delivering the welcome address



MILIND BENGLI
COO, business & operations, GTL Infrastructure Limited delivering the vote of thanks



Ajay Krishnan, director - business development (2nd from right) and Sunder Venugopal, principal engineer - engineering (extreme right), Cisco, receiving the award for Innovative Product - Rural category from Chris Houghton, head of region, Ericsson India and Arunabh Das Sharma, president, Bennett, Coleman & Co Ltd

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - RURAL

Cisco - Cisco Education Enabled Development (CEED 2700)
Conceived, designed and developed out of the Cisco Globalisation Centre in Bangalore, the Cisco Education Enabled Development ("CEED") platform has been built for emerging markets and rural areas in particular. Deriving synergies from technology, process and business innovations, it overcomes the shortage of quality teachers and skilled instructors in rural areas. For the vast, resource constrained geographies, this solution delivers live video and voice interaction between a teacher or instructor and a student.



Sandeep Yadav, executive director, Data Business, MTS India, receiving the award for Innovative Product - Data category

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - DATA

MTS India - Memory on Dongle
Memory on Dongle is a device based programme which leverages the USB dongle as a delivery platform for Telecom Applications, Solutions and Value Added Services. Memory on dongle enhances the Internet experience of the user by providing targeted, relevant and customised content and is also instrumental in creating new monetisation opportunities for the operator following an eco-system approach.



Prakash Bajpai, CEO & managing director, Tikona Digital Networks Pvt Ltd, receiving the award for Innovative Product - Broadband category

INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - BROADBAND

Tikona Digital Networks Pvt Ltd - Tikona Secured Wireless Broadband
Tikona pioneered a 4 Mbps wireless broadband solution for heavy usage multi-user homes, at a breakthrough capex per subscriber, which is 1/7th that of wireline and a operating cost which is 1/5th that of traditional macro-cell wireless networks, by using ultra energy efficient and eco-friendly small cell network infrastructure, to create a financially viable broadband service that can be rolled out to millions of unconnected households countrywide.



Vivek Mathur, chief commercial officer, Vodafone India Limited, receiving the award for Excellence in Marketing category from Agnello Dias, co-founder and chief creative officer, Taproot India

EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING

Vodafone India Limited - Internet is Fun on Vodafone
The campaign objective is to drive trial of the Rs 25 Internet pack by improving quality of awareness and thereby driving relevance for Internet on the mobile. There was seamless execution across 360 degree media since audience got exposed to one new service/proposition every week via the TV commercial, and all media vehicles worked like clockwork to change the messaging every week across, outdoors, print, radio, digital apart from TV.



Ankur Lal, CEO (centre), Vishesh Gupta, CBO (2nd from right), Sanjeev Goel, CMO (extreme right), Infoztech Software Private Limited, Infoztech Software Private Limited, receiving the award for Innovative Managed Services - OEM category from RK Upadhyay, chairman & managing director, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd and Ashok Sud, secretary general, Association of Unified Telecom Service Providers of India (AUSPI)

INNOVATIVE MANAGED SERVICES - OEM

Infoztech Software Private Limited - Energy Tracking Service
Energy Tracking Service, Infoztech's unique managed service offering in Saas Model that enables telecom tower companies to monitor and optimise their high cost of energy and diesel consumption and improve overall operational efficiency.



RK Bahuguna, CMD (2nd from right), RailTel Corporation of India Ltd and his colleagues, receiving the award for Social Initiative category from Sandeep Girotra, head of India region, Nokia Solutions & Networks and R Sundar, director, The Times of India Group

SOCIAL INITIATIVE

RailTel Corporation of India Ltd. - Broadband at Panchayats & IT infrastructure at Gram Panchayats

RailTel believes that rural India can be uplifted through education, employment and better primary health services and thus, has undertaken CSR activity to address these issues at grass root level. IT infrastructure at Gram Panchayats bridges the digital divide and helps students, local youth as well as patients in rural areas.

PUBLIC POLL WINNERS

The public poll based awards were given to brands that were selected through a Public Poll which was conducted across India by The Economic Times, through print advertisements, online polls and social networking websites.



Sonia Dhawan, One97 Communications Ltd receiving the award on behalf of WhatsApp, for My Favorite Communication App category

MY FAVOURITE COMMUNICATION APP

WhatsApp



Sashi Shankar, CMO, Idea Cellular Limited, receiving the award for My Favourite Service Provider category

MY FAVOURITE SERVICE PROVIDER

Idea Cellular

MY TRUSTED PHONE BRAND

Samsung

PHOTOS: VINOD KUMAR