



Finding a brighter future in the digital economy

While most of the world was working and studying at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, CSPs provided essential connectivity and services to businesses and consumers. They had to prioritize customer engagement to overcome the challenges of this massive societal shift and connect people on an unprecedented scale. They delayed disconnections, extended payment deadlines and provided free connectivity to schools and underserved communities.

CSPs must continue this focus on their customers to maintain growth as the world moves toward achieving economic recovery and “the new normal.” Comprehensive digital transformation to modernize BSS/OSS will be an integral part of supporting greater customer engagement by enabling a shift away from monolithic software deployments and creating more agile environments.

In an industry as dynamic as communications, it can be difficult to fully predict future trends. However, it is clear that successful companies will have one thing in common — they will be disruptors. They will put pressure on traditional industry players

to rethink the role of their BSS/OSS in changing their business models and networks for greater customer engagement.

CSPs should focus on these key areas in 2022:

1. A platform approach

The search for industry revenue growth is firmly on the B2B side of CSP business, and new network technologies for 5G are stimulating a wave of opportunities with enterprises. We can see operators trying to create innovative 5G pricing models for the consumer segment. Certain operators are creating bundled cloud applications like bundled cloud gaming and 3D shopping with their 5G offerings to entice the consumer segment into paying extra for 5G services. CSPs will

invest in platforms with cloud-native applications, which will allow them to fully leverage these new revenue streams.

The platform approach provides a rich and automated interface to consumers and enterprises through standardized APIs and simplifies the adoption of next-generation network technology. We expect CSPs to invest in building a digital platform to accelerate partner-driven revenue opportunities and drive efficiency and collaboration by digitalizing internal IT. This digital platform will consequently require automation tools, AI, digital collaboration and virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) to help the operators' internal IT teams to streamline processes and increase profit.

2. Edge automation and monetization

Edge technology and MEC apps are already transforming many industries, such as manufacturing, retail, smart cities and transportation. In fact, COVID-19 accelerated adoption of edge technologies to avoid personal contact and maximize process automation. Major retail companies have equipped more of their stores with self-service checkouts, and transportation hubs are using facial recognition and temperature checks to monitor traveler activity and issue COVID-19 alerts.

CSPs are using edge cloud and 5G to diversify into new markets and provide customers with greater value through new MEC services. However, MEC applications can reside on multiple edge hosts in multiple locations and may use both CSP and hyperscaler edge cloud platforms. MEC services are therefore highly complex and have stringent latency and performance requirements.

CSPs will need to invest in E2E MEC service orchestration to effectively automate edge cloud. These solutions must be placed above RAN, MEC, transport and core domain orchestrators and automate the E2E MEC service lifecycle, including assurance and continuous optimization, to prepare the entire network for on-demand service delivery, latency and speed.

The success of edge services will depend on the ability of CSPs to efficiently and rapidly monetize these new digital services. CSPs need to invest in digital BSS solutions for ultra-low latency charging and distributed rating and charging to thousands of edge sites. Next-generation digital BSS solutions will have to support slice-based and cross-slice charging scenarios, cost-efficient charging requirements for multitenancy and on-demand scaling to increase the number of subscriptions and devices.

3. B2B and B2B2X models

These models provide efficient and scalable processes for engaging with customers and partners while also enabling knowledge-sharing across organizations. Effectively implementing

B2B and B2B2X models requires industry knowledge of targeted verticals with a comprehensive understanding of their strategic priorities, digitalization needs and unique business challenges. In this context, we see CSPs investing in standalone 5G and 5G private networks to serve their enterprise customers better. To maximize revenue opportunities from enterprises, mobile operators will need to build vertical sector capabilities or partner with companies with sector-specific knowledge. Each sector will likely have unique needs and applications with requirements for a different combination of performance attributes, such as speed, latency and reliability.

Future sales in the enterprise segment will also require a more consultative approach to foster greater collaboration in addressing enterprise pain points and integrating new systems into existing IT environments. CSPs will need to build consulting and system integration capabilities either in house or through partnerships.

However, CSPs will need to first deal with their own operational issues before they can effectively meet the demands of business customers. Complex activities, such as resource optimization, service qualification and design, and discovery, prevent optimal service fulfillment and create undesirable fallout. CSPs must streamline their siloed BSS/OSS systems and focus on BSS/OSS convergence, E2E service orchestration and service management by transforming existing IT systems for greater automation and value-driven pricing flexibility. Creating a single view of the customer by simplifying and streamlining their IT will enable CSPs to vastly improve business customer satisfaction.

5. Immersive digital experiences

Underpinning all of these trends is the need for operators to not lose sight of the customer by maintaining a high level of service, engagement, satisfaction and loyalty. At a time when service offerings can look similar from one operator to another, the only way to stand out from the crowd is by offering a superior customer experience.

Operators must proactively identify and solve problems through social media, mobility, analytics and the cloud to reduce churn, launch new services and gain competitive advantages. The provider that manages to do this will be more efficient, more proactive and ultimately more innovative than the competition.

Looking down the road

If recent times have taught us anything, it is that no one can predict with absolute certainty what a new year will bring. However, one thing is certain: the communications industry will look very different in 2022. CSPs will need to adopt new ways of looking at networks, creating and managing services, and providing the best experience possible. The only way they can achieve these goals is by having the right BSS/OSS architecture in place to develop, deliver and monetize new technologies in disruptive business models. **TR**

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