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Driving monetisation

Merely offering a diversified content portfolio isn't enough.
Operators need to move away from the "one size fits all" approach.

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These are interestingly challenging times for telecom operators. Whilst keeping pace with fast-changing market trends and customer demands, these players must fire-fight on several other fronts simultaneously. I allude, of course, to competition from over-the-top players, regulatory intervention, rapidly declining average revenue per user and wafer-thin profit margins.

Needless to say, then, operators are no longer laughing all the way to the bank. Not the way they used to in the early days, at least. To illustrate, as per GSMA's The Mobile Economy 2017 report, in 2016, total mobile revenues reached $1.05 trillion, a 2.2 per cent increase on 2015. Now for the bad news: this number is amongst the lowest operators have registered over the last ten years!

So, what can an operator do? Look for new monetisation opportunities, of course! Take note, though, this doesn't merely mean slicing and dicing customer data to gain useful insights. (Although I certainly don't mean to dismiss this crucial process in the overall scheme of things). The point is that it goes deeper than that. A fair starting point would be to state that leveraging business applications to the fullest is a good idea. Especially if simplifying business processes and delivering timely, relevant and contextual content is on one's priority list.

Tapping the enterprise opportunity

In this context, the global e-commerce space springs readily to mind. It is, needless to say, doing roaring business and is expected to post an impressive compound annual growth rate of over 19 per cent by 2020, as per Technavio.

Now for the grey areas. Like all successful industries, the e-commerce space, too, has its share of challenges. If one were to list them out, they would broadly span management-centric issues pertaining to logistics, the company's "fleet-on-street" force and inventory.

Of course, over the years, these players have deployed a plethora of innovative applications to address these challenges. Warehouse sharing is an interesting example in this regard. Now, while it certainly helped e-commerce majors optimise cost, it has, without a doubt, given way to new and equally pressing issues. In other words, e-commerce players find them-

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Declining use of traditional voice and SMS services means operators must pick up the slack with revenue generation from other services.

selves weighing the scales in favour of optimised cost versus increased complexity.

And this is where telecom operators step in. Armed with offerings such as end-to-end sales and distribution management, operators are well-equipped to nip all these issues in the bud. Here's how:

Why end-to-end sales and distribution management is good for your business:

- Maintains all channels with varied business, commission and target rules in an end-to-end manner
- Supports inventory and warehouse management
- Supports the dealer lifecycle in an end-to-end manner
- Real-time view of existing stock and ongoing sales

The growing importance of engaging customers with personalised content

Over time, digital content has undergone several permutations and combinations. Traditional voice-based services are giving way to new age digital services. Now, though data still leads the pack, the emphasis is no longer on pure entertainment or music-based offerings. To illustrate, operators are beginning to focus on non-traditional services like media/entertainment, health, mobile banking solutions, emergency management and response systems, medication reminder services, cloud-based campus solutions, digital classrooms, contextual commerce, geo-fencing, predictive offerings, etcetera. The list is endless.

Of course, merely offering a diversified content portfolio isn't enough. The next (most important) step is to move away from the "one size fits all" approach. It's simple enough, really- today's customer knows what they want and are looking to engage with brands that offer a personalised experience across multiple channels.

The trick today for any operator is to be omnipresent and deliver more accurate and relevant information, both on-and-offline.

And this brings us to the importance of a service delivery platform. In a nutshell, the offering ensures that operators are able to craft tailor-made content for various industries. It is, essentially, an ecosystem for any operator to monetise their services from end-customers and enterprises.

Why a service delivery platform is a must-have today

- The platform delivers content via the analytics, cloud and mobile platforms
- It helps reduce development and integration costs
- It offers customers a unified experience across channels

Please remember that this is by no means an exhaustive list of how operators can leverage monetisation opportunities. They are by no means silver bullets for this purpose either. In the end, all of the discussion points in this piece have their own challenges and merits. Though they do have the potential to help operators reduce churn and expand recurring revenues.

Operators, are you listening?