

BIZ TALK: **GANESH NATARAJAN**

# Creating a customer-oriented culture



President of the country. In the business environment too, we are seeing the shift from product or service centric ideas to processes and strategies focused at granular customer segmentation and targeting, for business benefit.

The true game changers for the creation of the customer centric enterprise have been the rapid maturity of cloud, social media and mobility, a trio of new capabilities that are clubbed today as CLO-SOMO. And while cloud computing has provided a viable option for IT managers to decide where work should be performed and social media has provided choices of who companies can work with to develop new capabilities for the future, it is the transformational use of the mobile phone for applications that go well beyond traditional voice and text services that is leading the transformation of the business enterprise all over the world!

Mobility is today providing touch points to all stakeholders of the enterprise, within and beyond the traditional value chain. Suppliers are provided reminders to play their role in a just-in-time manufacturing operation, warehouse managers and staff are assisted in the receiving function as well as ensuring seamless transfer to the shop floor, and plant operations managers are facilitated in the management of work orders, inventory and all manufacturing



assets. The new approaches to small lot manufacturing and manufacturing execution systems have benefited greatly from mobility solutions at the factory level and to an even greater extent, the time and cost performance of services delivery operations have been transformed with equipment repairs and spare parts provisioning and management of customer relationships benefiting the most.

Apart from the supply chains being optimised, demand cycle management has also been transformed with distributors stockists and retailers able to scan inventory place orders and request spe-

cific services. Direct access to customers has led to multi-channel retailing taking precedence over traditional multi-layered supplies with the recent trends in the US Thanksgiving holiday providing a trend for the future. 'Black Friday' shopping on the internet rose sharply while business at physical store locations actually declined. Through direct Web channels, consumers are able to receive promotional offers and shopping cart options and enabled through mobile commerce to complete impulse purchasing transactions without access to a physical store or even a computer. The

extraordinary rise of Flipkart and a range of new Web services demonstrate the growing adoption by Indian customers every month.

Technology majors like SAP have been quick to focus their energies on mobility and have seen a smart uptick in their business in these areas. With new generic applications for improving time-to-market and total cost of ownership, and custom applications for specific sectors, the growth of online mobile solutions is expected to grow even faster as adoption increases. A major bank in Africa has been able to create a new low cost banking services channel for millions of un-banked and under-banked consumers, simplify and accelerate account activation and credit card management processes and deploy over five thousand 'bank shops' or franchise outlets to service customers. A client of ours in Australia, one of the most successful low cost airlines, has implemented mobile flight rostering and is now experimenting with the iPad to have aircraft weight and other parameters, as also updated flight information available to pilots and crew.

In day-to-day company management too, knowledge workers as well as a cross section of executives are enabled to communicate and collaborate across functions and locations, managers have

instant access for approval of travel plans and claims and business leaders have instant access to schedule changes and business metrics through dashboards on their mobile devices. Companies all over the world are embracing mobility to improve productivity across the board and specifically reduce staff costs and improve employee responsiveness, enable partners through inventory access and reduction in day sales outstanding and delight customers through easier access and faster information and transaction flows.

The adoption of mobility across the enterprise will call for an alteration to traditional business models and ensuring readiness is the prime challenge for strategy planners and CIOs as they attempt to balance enterprise priorities with the demands of the stakeholders. Decisions on which business process to target first, what devices to enable with the wide array of access devices now in use and how to manage enterprise architecture and security will have to be taken by management teams and even boards to extend the frontiers of business and get truly customer focused in the organisation plan for the future.

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