Boosting business using modern enterprise connectivity
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Table of contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Business evolution through improved connectivity
4. Connecting stakeholders and customers
5. Connectivity through an MPLS-VPN
6. A connected workforce is an effective workforce
7. Driving productivity and service availability using enterprise connectivity
8. The Unified Communications approach
9. Conclusion
Executive Summary

Enterprise connectivity has increased in importance over recent years as customers, partners and stakeholders begin to rely on new methods of communications to interact and collaborate. Increasingly, business resources are being integrated and made available digitally so that operations may be accessed and run without time or location barriers.

Modern connectivity systems can truly mobilise a workforce, improve the abilities of regional teams and create deeper relationships with customers and suppliers. Technology is transforming businesses across the country, improving margins, promoting greater collaboration and powering a new generation of customer-facing services.

Adopting integrated communications and connectivity systems provides a range of benefits across multiple sectors. This white paper outlines some of the key advantages of these systems and provides examples of how successful Indian businesses are using enterprise connectivity technology to transform their operations.

Introduction

Enterprise technology solutions have completely revolutionised businesses across India, and around the world, in recent years. Increased adoption of hosted computing has transformed the abilities of companies to operate across multiple locations and enabled employees to access assets remotely. Cloud migration is occurring in all sectors, with analyst firm 451 Research predicting investments in cloud computing in India is set to triple by 2020.

The adoption of new technologies has led to the development of digital connectivity systems designed to improve the abilities of both office-based and distributed remote workforces. These systems have transformed the way business can be done and improved the ways by which customers and business stakeholders interact with each other.

Enterprise connectivity used to be rigid and was often limited to siloed engagement patterns where calls, emails and data transfer were operated through separate systems. The new generation of connectivity tools offers levels of flexibility and integration far beyond this.

The solutions now available, enable companies to innovate, improve their service levels and achieve cost efficiencies, ensuring they remain competitive in an ever-changing and increasingly competitive landscape. Some usage scenarios illustrating these capabilities are outlined in this white paper, but many more are available on the Tata Tele Business Services website.
Connecting stakeholders and customers

In this era where customer intimacy is paramount there is a need to ensure constant connectivity between customers and the business. It is a common complaint that technology has actually made direct customer contact more impersonal and customers often face the frustration of being unable to speak to a ‘real’ person. In fact, enterprise connectivity systems make it possible for customers to easily reach the relevant staff members regardless of where they might be located.

An integrated connectivity system can offer a range of channels for customer engagement including SMS, instant chat and multi-media file exchange facilities. Offering this level of service means the customer or partner can deal directly with the relevant employee using their preferred channel. Access to real time
enterprise data in turn greatly enhances the employee’s ability to deal effectively with a query and can result in swifter resolution of issues.

Another key feature of today’s enterprise systems is state-of-the-art security. Security policies can be configured to limit or provide specific company assets in the core network depending on the needs and authority of each stakeholder or employee.

Traditionally, businesses used an EPABX – or PBX to distribute a few lines amongst multiple employees. Modern digital systems offer the same call facilities as traditional versions but include range of improvements to mobilise businesses and customer service provision. Features such as dynamic call-transfer and conference calling, the ability to record calls, mobile connectivity and even the exchange of large files and video content are all part of the modern PBX.

Put simply, an MPLS-VPN is a flexible solution used to securely transport network traffic to a range of locations and geographies, offering employees access to central facilities from wherever they are accessing the business network. Technology allows most forms of data and even calls to be transported over an MPLS-VPN.

It is a secure and scalable way of connecting several locations on a private network to cater to the multifaceted needs of a dynamic, growing enterprise with facilities to connect distributed workforces and support real-time information sharing.

The advanced features enable prioritisation of traffic some of which may be based on type of data, the credentials of specific employees or locations.

A major advantage of a managed MPLS-VPN is scalability. Bandwidth and connectivity assets can be allocated depending on need, with capacity available to enable high-bandwidth use cases such as live video conferencing, large file transfer or extensive back-up.

For companies with a need to offer access to the system for suppliers and customers, an MPLS-VPN includes the ability to restrict network availability to certain assets using pre-set authentication protocols.

One of the key connectivity options being adopted by enterprises with a need to connect facilities across geographies and remote workers is an MPLS-VPN.

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A connected workforce is an effective workforce

Just five years ago when an employee was working in the field or from another site, communication with them was difficult and relied on the availability of traditional landline technology or the use of two-way radio systems. Although reliable for voice, the exchange of data, imagery or multimedia was difficult. With increased penetration and adoption of tools such as 3D diagrams and video, the provision of these elements has become increasingly important in many industries, ranging from healthcare to architecture to engineering and logistics.

With high-speed networks and cloud services, remote employees and offices can be connected through dedicated private networks to securely access the resources and documents they need, which may be centrally stored in the cloud. Such networks also support video conferencing and other collaborative tools to integrate distributed work forces.

One way in which doing business today differs from a few years ago is the speed at which organisations need to grow, evolve and ‘ramp up’. They often need to quickly and securely connect new sites and offices to the existing network infrastructure. During these growth phases the capacity of the overall system may also need to be increased. By deploying cloud-based hosted solutions with high-levels of scalability, a company can deal with periods of rapid growth or even downscale if required. If consumed as a service these new connections can be deployed almost immediately, offering improved agility and a competitive advantage.

Driving productivity and service availability using enterprise connectivity

As outlined above, the use of scalable enterprise connectivity solutions can have a positive impact on staff in remote locations and external relations with customers, but there are also other tangible benefits to a range of departments within a variety of organisations across India.

Flexibility is one of the key advantages to hosted connectivity solutions. They can easily be scaled and customised to meet a number of usage scenarios and industries.

These could include, but are not limited to:
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Real-time customer connectivity:
Companies with direct customer-facing propositions use modern connectivity solutions to increase the speed and reliability of their operations.

Tata Tele recently worked with an education app provider to improve its ability to answer student queries through the use of more dynamic communications infrastructure.

The solution consisted of a SIP trunk connected to a call server, which is used to divert student calls to executives on their GSM mobile phones. To enhance the quality of these calls taken from within the office, Tata fitted cellular signal boosters on site. In addition to improving executive availability, this scalable solution also collects data on calls for performance monitoring and makes recordings for regulatory reasons.

Following the deployment, it is now able to manage its operations more efficiently, offer staff greater workplace flexibility and meet all of its legal responsibilities.

Multi-location connectivity:
In companies with multiple sites and offices, it critical to ensure provision of voice, data and server connectivity is of an equally high standard across all sites – regardless of what legacy technology and equipment they use.

Tata Tele Business Services recently worked with an IT company to connect 30 branches of a well-known bank. The project included links to respective data centres, voice and connectivity provision and security optimisation across all sites. Experts connected all banks to a single hub from one router, synchronised using MPLS VPN. Security systems were deployed to include all best practice standards used within the banking industry. The result is an extremely smooth system that allows all locations to connect to central resources without compromising security. This has increased levels of service and increased the speed and accuracy of operations.

Real-time business:
In the financial services sector, access to real-time information can mean a significant competitive advantage.

One of India’s leading trading platforms Karvy, deployed an MPLS VPN to improve the accuracy and availability of its real-time stock trading facility. Tata Tele Business Services installed multicast feeds enabling the provision of real-time data while providing separate VPNs to create a physical division between both its customer and franchisee offices. Catering to Karvy’s specific business model, six individual traffic prioritisation lanes were created to
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ensure the company was able supply premium services to specific customers and robust fallback for all customers. Critical traffic was also given prioritisation status to ensure trades were executed with minimal delay.

The multicast solution ensured traders received prompt and timely delivery of stock price changes, meeting the dual needs of high quality feeds and bandwidth conservation. The MPLS-VPN solution offered the customer a cost effective, secure connectivity solution with simple network management and a future-proof scaling model.

Revolutionising the call centre:

Call centres remain critical for many of India’s most prestigious customer-facing companies – including vendors using telemarketing and manufacturers of items with a regular need for customer support facilities such as IT component companies.

In these usage scenarios, many forward thinking companies are looking to SIP Trunking technology to increase the productivity and viability of call centres.

SIP Trunking enables many connections to be delivered over a single or small number of physical links, leading to significant savings. In a recent example, 900 SIP channels were distributed over five physical links. Each SIP Trunk was connected to an ethernet port at the respective diallers, with 2 ports each, one for local LAN and another for housing a SIP Trunk solution.

The result was an increase in productivity, high call completion rates and uptime, all gained from next generation switches at the core and a protected fibre transmission network installed with the system. This high-spec technology has also been used to supply SMS automation technology in industries using SMS integration rather than telemarketing facilities, with similar benefits.

Multimedia file share and broadcast:

There are also a wide number of sector-specific scenarios, including in the broadcast industry where companies are able to utilise content delivery networks (CDN) to simultaneously supply content from multiple connected terminals. This reduces latency for the viewer and increases service availability.

The flexibility and range of options available for enterprises is vast, but there are distinct options and advantages no matter what the industry and number
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of employees. These encompass wired or wireless environments and are fully scalable in terms of number of employees, modules and addition of future solutions.

The Unified Communications approach

A significant part of the evolution of enterprise communications is the launch of ‘Unified Communications’ (UC) services. UC combines an organisation’s complete range of communications systems – including voice, wireless and data services – through one centrally managed system.

Effective UC strategies ease communication between all stakeholders within and outside the corporate ecosystem, across locations. Typically this includes data and messaging systems, IP voice diversion and answering, video calling, IP file transfer, enterprise mobility solutions and remote working tools and is carried over various technology infrastructures as may be suitable for the specific premises such as MPLS VPN or SIP Trunk.

SIP Trunking – the pivot of unified communications

SIP Trunking is a central enabler of any unified communications strategy. Typically the strategy is built around next generation voice supplied through SIP Trunk and is enhanced by the availability of streaming media, one-to-one voice and business facilities such as desktop sharing, web conferencing, shared presentations and collaboration.

SIP Trunking supplies a much enhanced version of the services which traditional fixed infrastructure provides, with additional flexibility and cost savings.

By incorporating these tools into a single system, employees and businesses are able to switch between methods of communication and have a central repository for all correspondence within the company. They are also able to offer greater access to facilities from alternative locations through the cellular or other public or private network. One of the major advantages of a unified strategy is the ability to include a robust all-encompassing security feature while maintaining the flexibility offered by a multitude of access points. UC is the natural evolution of enterprise communications and enables greater control and accessibility to infrastructure to colleagues, no matter where they are. Advantages include the ability to connect in real-time to colleagues using chat, voice, video and file exchange. It is an all-encompassing strategy to provide future-proof infrastructure.

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Conclusion

As companies from across India continue to invest in a range of full and hybrid cloud infrastructure, it is vital communications facilities are also upgraded to ensure full advantage is made of the significant investments in these modern systems.

Network-based communications systems have the power to improve enterprise communications and information transfer, even offering employees with work-from-anywhere solutions; and, enhanced customer and supplier relations with increased accessibility.

Adoptioion of next generation technology infrastructure can provide real-time services to drive usage, increase customer satisfaction and ultimately propel profitability.

Companies across the whole spectrum of industry in India have been deploying infrastructure to support upgraded communications facilities. Even small and medium businesses have been exploring and benefitting from superior digital connectivity solutions providing them an agile and flexible foundation for agile rapid growth.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Connectivity</th>
<th>Cloud &amp; SaaS</th>
<th>IoT Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Solutions</td>
<td>Security Solutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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