

The Hyper-Connected Enterprise

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The invention of the telegraph had a most profound impact on communications - an impact that has since been taken for granted or largely forgotten. Before its invention, sending a message an ocean away would take anywhere from one to several weeks. The productivity improvement offered by the telegraph was significant - reducing transmission speeds by a factor of over 2000.

The technology found immediate application as a tool of the state, and was subsequently adopted during the industrial revolution by what may be described as the enterprise segment of the time. The enterprise market for communications services today is not too dissimilar, in that like their predecessors, they are seeking more effective ways to communicate and collaborate with partner and supplier networks. The addition of another dimension however separates modern enterprise markets from what came before. Engagement and communication with consumers was always either relatively limited and local in nature, or largely one way. The Internet, followed by the proliferation of broadband has allowed enterprises the opportunity to not only once again capture unprecedented efficiency gains but also engage with their consumers in ways previously thought impossible.

Telecom companies across the world noticed this transformation, and have responded by increasing investments in services, applications and content aimed at offering value and new experiences to their subscribers, retail & enterprise. The role of every telecom company has now evolved from mere access provision to that of a strategic systems and content partner to enterprises and consumers. Going forward digital applications, services and content will be key to the growth of telecom companies.

The effects of the modern hyper-connected world on the enterprise market can perhaps best be evaluated by studying simultaneous changes occurring in three key areas - business models, processes and the enterprise itself.

In an era when consumers are connected and empowered, when the networks that connect them are capable of

offering more than simple analog connectivity, and when the lines that have traditionally separated businesses from one another continue to blur, new business models will certainly emerge. The ability to engage directly with consumers has allowed organizations to innovate in near real time and in some cases helped accelerate time to market. We see the manifestation of this ability in the form of user-driven communities and backend systems that are designed to deliver a steady stream of customer feedback that organizations can use to learn and adapt.

Hyper-connectivity brings with it a host of benefits for the enterprise market, given and especially its ability to change the nature of work. Entire legacy processes are being positively disrupted as digital connectivity and specific targeted applications further the enterprise agenda. Modern virtual business networks are enabling real-time communications and greater collaboration across global supply chains, and paving the way for higher degrees of automation & flexibility. Networks and services are already being conceived and deployed to significantly augment manufacturing capacity and outputs by leveraging hyperconnected intelligent networks that draw intelligence from a vast array of sensors, things, devices and people.

Digital communications are also profoundly impacting the way we work. At the heart of the shift in the enterprise is the availability of vast amounts of data on people and processes, bolstered by intelligent algorithms that allow for new levels of operational flexibility, variability and dynamism to address opportunity & need.

Powering this transformation is the combined effect of innovation occurring due to global research and development; a thriving global optical fibre market that is improving the business case for FTTH and 5G; a vast global network powered by infrastructure on land, at sea and in space that makes sure we are always connected; and a powerful public network that offers immense choice, convenience and opportunity to all who can access it. Trends in the enterprise segment signal clearly towards a more connected ecosystem that values flexibility, efficiency and great opportunity. ●