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Advancements in 5G offer significant opportunities for OSS/BSS vendors: Comviva

At a time when global telecom operators and CSPs are embracing 5G technology, fast paced advancements in 5G offer great opportunities for OSS and BSS vendors today. They can leverage 5G's innovations in service-based architecture (SBA). Realizing these opportunities, SDN, NFV, and MEC enable new applications, create diverse revenue streams, and provide customized solutions for various industries. With its 5G-ready BlueMarble platform - Comviva is ideally poised to drive 5G innovations for telecoms today.

Sachin Saraf, EVP & Chief Operating Officer-DigiTech, Comviva speaks with Zia Askari from TelecomDrive.com about current trends in the OSS/BSS space and how the company is driving innovation for its customers.

5G promises a new era of revenue opportunities beyond data and voice. What trends in OSS/BSS solutions are emerging to help operators monetize these new revenue streams, such as network slicing, IoT services, and edge computing?

The evolution from 4G to 5G represents a significant leap in network technology, encompassing improvements in speed, latency, architecture, and functionalities.

4G uses a monolithic architecture with centralized control, while 5G introduces a service-based architecture (SBA) that modularizes network functions for greater flexibility. 5G adopts cloud-native principles, leveraging (Network Function Virtualization - NFV) and containerization (e.g., Kubernetes) to deploy network functions.

Unlike 4G's reliance on centralized data centers, 5G integrates Multi-access Edge Computing (MEC) to reduce latency and enables applications like real-time analytics, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR).

5G promotes open interfaces and APIs, enhancing interoperability and enabling third-party developers to create innovative applications and services, fostering a vibrant ecosystem. It uses Software-Defined Networking (SDN) to decouple the control plane from the data plane allowing centralized, programmable network control, dynamic traffic management, and improved resource allocation. Advanced automation and AI in 5G, optimize performance and automate responses for more efficient, reliable networks.

Monetization in 4G is primarily through traditional voice and data services, whereas 5G opens new revenue streams through diverse network slicing, IoT, and MEC. This shift allows Telcos to become value orchestrators, supporting smart cities, Industry 4.0, and advanced healthcare applications like remote surgeries and telemedicine.

With the rollout of 5G technology, what role do you see OSS/BSS systems playing in the deployment and management of 5G networks?

Advancements in 5G technology offer significant opportunities for OSS and BSS vendors. They can leverage 5G's innovations in service-based architecture (SBA). SDN, NFV, and MEC enable new applications, create diverse revenue streams, and provide customized solutions for various industries.

Service-Based Architecture (SBA) allows for dynamic service provisioning, advanced service

orchestration, and API integration, improving operational efficiency and enabling a broader ecosystem. SDN and NFV enable automated network management, resource optimization, and scalable solutions, enhancing network flexibility and responsiveness. MEC brings computation and storage closer to end-users, allowing for edge service management, real-time analytics, and new business models.

5G also enables the creation of industry-specific solutions, such as smart factory management and telehealth services, through network slicing and MEC. OSS/BSS vendors can implement sophisticated billing systems and subscription models and facilitate marketplaces for third-party applications. This provides sector-specific opportunities in manufacturing, healthcare, and automotive industries, leveraging 5G's low latency and high reliability.

The telecom market is highly competitive and price-sensitive. How can advanced OSS/BSS systems help telecom operators optimize their operations and reduce costs?

OSS/BSS vendors can help Telcos reduce costs across two dimensions. The first dimension focuses on their existing connectivity-based business model, which relies on fixed subscriptions and offers limited possibilities for revenue growth. The second dimension involves what I will call adjunct markets, where Telcos aim to enhance revenue beyond connectivity.

Addressing Technical Debt and Simplifying Operations: The cost for Telcos in their existing connectivity business is largely due to the complexity built up over years of not addressing technical debt. This accumulated complexity can be tackled by Simplifying Business Processes including streamlining and automating operations to reduce inefficiencies. Friction-free

customer Journeys ensure smoother customer interactions to improve satisfaction and reduce service costs. By addressing these areas, Telcos can significantly reduce operational costs and enhance the customer experience.

Platform Approach for New Revenue Streams: In adjunct markets, Telcos are looking to diversify their revenue sources beyond traditional connectivity. OSS/BSS vendors can assist by creating platforms that facilitate collaborations with other businesses using a platform approach. This will ensure that Telcos can address multiple business models or revenue streams without having to create new systems from scratch.

Can you highlight some of the advancements Comviva has made in this area? What are the company's offerings in this space?

One of our top line product is BlueMarble which is an integrated digital commerce, order management, customer care and partner management platform. Specifically designed for Communication Service Providers (CSPs), it is 5G ready, cloud-native, microservices based, open and modular digital platform that delivers business agility, high performance and flexibility to rapidly offer personalized digital experiences and journey.

The BlueMarble platform empowers CSPs to serve all customer types (consumers and businesses, existing and new), all channels (assisted, unassisted, current and future), multi-play businesses and actively leverage partner ecosystems. With this platform, we can support the entire digital customer lifecycle from discovery, shopping, ordering, and billing to payment and care. It enables CSPs actively access to new revenue sources while accelerating time to launch and monetize new

lines of business, such as 5G, Cloud applications, IoT and virtualized services.

This platform has performed exceptionally over the last few years and contributed to our growth journey. Recently, our BlueMarble BSS also received the Diamond Badge for TM Forum Open APIs Conformance.

Customer experience is a critical factor for telecom operators. How can next-generation OSS/BSS platforms improve customer satisfaction and loyalty?

Customer experience (CX) for Telcos encompasses multiple dimensions, including the perception and satisfaction with products and services. While companies like Apple control the app ecosystem to manage the user experience on their devices, Telcos must focus on delivering seamless, efficient, and personalized services to achieve customer delight.

Telcos can enhance CX by meeting customer requirements through personalized offerings, timely services, and user-friendly interfaces. Data analytics can help understand customer preferences and tailor services to individual needs, such as offering high-bandwidth plans to data-heavy users. Ensuring instant provisioning, 24/7 support, and a seamless omnichannel experience can greatly improve satisfaction. Providing robust self-service options and maintaining a consistent interface across all platforms can reduce frustration.

Embracing product and service quality is crucial. This includes investing in infrastructure for reliable connectivity, implementing next-gen technologies like 5G, IoT, and AI, and continuously improving services-based feedback. Simplifying customer journeys through streamlined processes, efficient operations, and transparent communication can further enhance CX, building trust and satisfaction.