

Continuous transformation – wholesale is the key to unlocking retail value

They may be buzz words, but change, innovation, flexibility, collaboration and speed are more than that at TELUS. In fact, these concepts are at the very heart of, and the driving force behind, the extensive transformation of this very modern, 21st century service provider

At TELUS, the future of telecoms is about more than technologies and networks; it is about creating and transforming the partnership model to address industry dynamics on multiple levels. TELUS maintains that the platforms, capabilities and trusted relationships built within wholesale organisations over the past twenty years, hold the key to unlocking the true value of this industry.

Brent Allison, vice president of Partner Solutions marketing at TELUS, is passionate about this dynamic: “Our industry is an exciting place to be. But we must pool resources and share best practices to unlock the value of our markets. Along with our partners in international wholesale, we are in a great position to lead the industry forward.”

TELUS maintains that the platforms owned and managed by traditional wholesale organisations will be instrumental in the uptake of advanced retail services for an open world. To enable great retail services, wholesale teams must invest in a common approach to intelligent networks, wholesale enablers and transformational outsourcing. Sharing best practices across these three areas is the key to unlocking retail value.

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The formula begins with a commitment to open collaboration that supports the quality and reliability required by the ever-growing number of innovative content, application and software developers. The carrier relationships needed to make this collaboration a reality exist today in the wholesale organisations of most operators.

“The scale we built for the internet transiting and peering infrastructures successfully supported the first wave of innovation. Now is the time to take that base capability to the next level and create globally interconnected platforms for content delivery, infrastructure as a service and software as a service – the intelligent network. Nobody in

our industry is in a better position to do this than the wholesale teams that understand scale, settlement and partnering,” maintains Allison.

To deliver efficiently, operators need an underlying technical infrastructure based on open standards and industry collaboration. In the Web 2.0 world, expectations of network reach, performance and accessibility are accelerating with people’s need for global connectivity. Systems and business models that are fragmented or fractured across multiple networks and platforms cannot meet customer expectations.

Asked why intelligent networks are so important for the industry, Allison says: “Although people’s expectations and knowledge are increasingly sophisticated and their needs rapidly changing, they are most interested in getting the services they want – when and where they want them in easy to use packages. Our job at TELUS, and in the industry, is to meet and exceed that expectation. Our stance is an open approach.”

Open standards support collaboration and TELUS takes an active part in industry forums and standards bodies to help define the future of an industry in the midst of change. Standards are essential to the effective deployment of intelligent network architectures and applications. TELUS has representatives on the major bodies including: the i3 Forum which pioneers new levels of communication, routing and addressing in high-definition voice and video formats; the GSMA which leads initiatives in mobility and mobile applications; and the IPsphere group at TM Forum where an all-IP based Web 2.0 model supports innovation and stimulates end-user demand and control. The IP technology leadership underway in these groups helps deliver the innovative services that end users demand – quickly and cost-effectively.

Working with third-party developers puts operators at the heart of the innovation cycle. To take their part in the IP world however, telecoms systems and procedures must be fast and flexible enough to design, launch and tear down services according to their profitability and popularity. Building on the tradition of established services and relationships, today’s interconnected world of telecoms supports advanced internet and mobility services with the power to impact businesses and enhance people’s lives. Wholesale operators are unlocking value by evolving and transforming their internal processes,



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networks and technologies to support a broader, more adaptable set of services. Taking today’s “best-effort” internet and mobility services and applying guaranteed performance criteria for content and application delivery is a key starting point for unlocking retail value.

“There is a big transition in the industry where innovation isn’t coming from traditional, well-known brands but from new companies,” explains Allison. “Telcos must enable innovation and experimentation and bring both into their networks. To do this, they must open their capabilities to the developer community. We are well along this path with a number of current initiatives and are now applying our expertise in service excellence to push these solutions into the mainstream.”

TELUS has standardised on a set of APIs, web services, business requirements and languages that support third-party application providers on the TELUS network. This developer suite defines the relationship between third party suppliers and TELUS, outlining the expectations on both sides and allowing most business agreements to be negotiated automatically using standard procedures. The result is that innovative products can be identified and launched efficiently – the fastest in minutes.

Extending this open model across its entire architecture and applying it to both retail and wholesale relationships for fixed and mobile solutions is a critical success factor.

“Retail value is unlocked on an intelligent network when customers can identify and choose the elements they need to solve their business and communications challenges. They can get useful information about productivity tools, services and applications, delivered in user friendly packages,” says Allison. “Everything is standardised for consumers, wholesalers, enterprises and businesses large and small. We have pioneered this facility in parallel with mobile delivery services and created an open software as a service (SaaS), platform which can host products appealing to consumers, and SMEs at the high and low ends of the price spectrum.”

Another key ingredient for success is the deployment of wholesale enablers that pave the way for the next wave of innovation. With much of the creativity happening outside traditional telecoms, wholesale organisations are positioned to establish these new relationships and provide access to critical enablers like billing, directory, location and rights management. A consistent and scalable approach led by the wholesale teams makes it possible for these new, innovative services to transcend traditional service boundaries and scale to deliver on the promise of anytime, anywhere performance.

Recognised by industry peers and observers as a top performer in directory, clearing house and other information services in 2008 and 2009, TELUS takes a leadership role in helping other industry participants understand the critical nature of developing and delivering these enablers in an increasingly complex market. For instance, clients utilising the TELUS clearing house achieve a nearly 100% success rate on collections. This level of performance in an emerging market truly unlocks retail value.

According to Allison: “As an industry, our decades of expertise in directories and databases, built for supporting global telecoms services on shared and scaled resources, is transferrable to the new world. In fact, this expertise will prove invaluable in meeting the cost equation and service management requirements of the future where thousands of applications reside on thousands of different device types and operate in hundreds of unique networks.”

Attempting to meet this challenge with an independent, non-scalable approach will undoubtedly fail and result in poor service adoption rates.

Other wholesale enablers include provisioning, order management, billing reconciliation and settlement applications. TELUS makes these available as part of its approach to unlocking retail value. A rapid delivery solution means that operators and emerging providers can serve innovation to their customers without the expense of building or supporting their own systems. For example, with the integrated and highly scalable TELUS Future Suite, operators can launch a fully integrated suite of pre-tested applications, capabilities and services from leading vendors to their branded web sites and product portfolio, reducing the need for extensive internal resources. End users log onto a secure e-commerce portal and, with a few clicks, select and personalise the applications they need. TELUS complements the suite with an integrated customer experience programme, a help desk and state of the art contact centre facilities.

Finally, operators and innovators alike must provide efficient and

effective customer support in this brave new world. Innovation is great, but it must be supportable in a way that makes sense for all parties in the value chain. A transformational approach to service excellence that addresses both cost and performance is imperative.

As a leading full service carrier in Canada, TELUS understands this transformation imperative. Expertise in the telecoms market and knowing what it takes to deliver an improved customer experience in an efficient and effective manner, TELUS is a strategic business partner with successful programmes for building and supporting mobility and broadband service portfolios. It has translated these into best practices that support the operations of other carriers.

Allison continues: "New competition, new technology and a changing regulatory environment required a fresh approach to operations and customer care. Obviously, a transformation addresses costs, but we used the opportunity to also drive up customer satisfaction and position ourselves for continued success in a more competitive and fragmented market. Our inbound and outbound programmes for mobility and broadband services are well established and producing the results we want."

To support its rapid growth, TELUS partnered, several years ago, with a company specialising in customer care for quick and seamless sales and support services. The strength of the resulting partnership delivered such unprecedented innovation and best practices that it led to TELUS acquiring the partner. TELUS now provides contact centre support for large enterprise customers in several industries including

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telecommunications, consumer products, and the financial sector.

"The foundation of our approach is based on our own experience. TELUS made the transition from a service provider focussed on western Canada to a national carrier with global connections. The successful integration of our strategic acquisitions while building a next-generation network positions us to pass on the value of that experience. Today, we help other operators follow a similar path but without the expense and disruption such transformation entails. Our experience and commitment to partnering enhances their competitive advantage and contributes to their global success," says Allison.

Today, TELUS is helping other carriers unlock retail value and achieve measurable results with transformational outsourcing. Performance that achieves 80% or better first call resolution and greater than 95% Tier 1 resolution is more important than ever in a cost and performance-conscious market where application, device and network combinations can number in the thousands. Achieving results with a balanced combination of cost improvement, service excellence and



versatility, the TELUS integrated solution includes outsourced billing functions, directory services, customer care, operator services and software applications.

Without a doubt, this industry is in an exciting phase and international wholesale organisations are well positioned to lead the industry forward. Creating the anytime, anywhere experience takes trust and a commitment to share best practices in intelligent networks, wholesale enablers and transformational outsourcing. By focussing on the transforming principles outlined here, retail value can be unlocked and new levels of innovation discovered and delivered. ■



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