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alliances

THE GLOBAL BUSINESS OPTIMISATION AND MANAGED SERVICES PLATFORM HAS EXCEEDED CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS, SAYS SUBEX MANAGED SERVICES VP ASHWIN CHALAPATHY.
BY GAVIN BARFIELD

From

its modest beginnings when the company was formed in 1992, global telecoms software pioneer Subex has come a long way. Founder, entrepreneur and CEO

Subash Menon now oversees more than 300 installations and offices in the US, UK, Singapore and Australia.

Bangalore-based Subex is a leading global provider of business support systems for communications service providers. In the 19 years of its existence the company has moved from being just another systems integrator in the telecoms hardware space to becoming a leader in the challenging software space, focusing principally on business optimisation.

Publicly listed on the Indian Stock Exchange in 1999 with a (then) market capitalisation of US\$5 million, the expanding company subsequently set about a series of strategic acquisitions, including that of Canadian-based Syndesis in 2007. At the time, it was one of the largest overseas acquisitions by an Indian firm.

Business optimisation includes fraud prevention, revenue assurance, analytics, cost management and credit risk management. These are all factors that do not generate revenue directly, but ensure that the most revenue is collected and the least cost incurred, thereby maximising profit for the business.

As vice-president of Managed Services, Ashwin Chalapathy's catalogue of achievements since taking on his current role in 2009 is testimony to that breed of businessperson who sees opportunity in everything and never loses sight of the bigger picture, remaining focused on strategic goals.

His 12 years at Siemens Public Communication Networks Limited, in the specialised areas of operator support systems for fixed-line networks, high-availability platforms and network management systems for both fixed and mobile networks, identified him as the man Subex needed to drive its medium- and long-term aspirations of becoming a leading player offering managed services.

'Africa is a growing telecoms market. As a key part of our Business Optimisation portfolio, we are happy that our acclaimed and unique Revenue Operations Centre (ROC) platform and multiple solutions

like ROC Revenue Assurance and ROC Fraud Management, have exceeded the customer's expectations,' says Chalapathy.

'We're all about helping our customers achieve a competitive advantage through business optimisation – making sure they can achieve maximum operational efficiency.'

According to the authoritative Analysys Mason, Subex has been a market leader in business optimisation for four consecutive years, from 2007–2010. The company boasts an impressive client base, which includes 16 of the top 20 wireless operators worldwide and 26 of the top 50 biggest telecoms providers, as listed by the 2010 Forbes Global 2000 list.

'Subex pioneered the concept of a Revenue Operations Centre – an integrated operations infrastructure that enables profitable growth through co-ordinated operational control,' says Chalapathy. 'We developed the software ourselves and trademarked it. Our product portfolio powers the ROC and its best-in-class solutions enable revenue assurance, fraud management, data integrity management, cost management and interconnect/interparty settlement.

'Overall, the ROC allows operators to gain valuable insights and intelligence from the correlation of data. It provides actionable intelligence to operators and enables them to make informed decisions on near real-time basis.'

The company has a strong focus on providing innovative, customised offerings tailored to suit its clients' requirements, and offers full-fledged managed services to support them.

'Our long-term vision is to move towards providing a comprehensive managed services approach to optimise business assurance systems to deliver improved operational efficiencies'

Subex is able to leverage ROC and managed services to optimise the operations of any client business, while at the same time improving the customer experience and freeing significant management time so as to allow top management to focus on core priorities of their business.

The company has over 1 500 Subex experts worldwide over various BSS domains and demonstrates its thought leadership at multiple industry forums such as TM Forum, GSMA Fraud Forum, Global Settlements Carriers, ETNO and FIINA.

With Africa positively identified by visionary CEO Menon as an emerging market for the telecoms industry (especially regarding areas such as data integrity management), the continent is a high-growth area for the company. In August 2010, the company signed a contract with Econet Wireless Kenya to provide its ROC Revenue Assurance and ROC Fraud Management solutions. Econet Wireless is a diversified telecoms group with operations in nine countries in Africa, Europe and the East Asia Pacific Rim, offering products and services in mobile and fixed telephony services, internet and satellite.

In August this year, Subex successfully completed the implementation of both the solutions for this leading African operator and is now supporting them with managed services for their business operations. Econet was quoted as saying that they were pleased with the successful implementation and chose Subex because of their great track record with business optimisation, their experience on centralised implementations within Africa and their ability 'to not only deal with our organisation at a central level but also reach out to the company at a local level'.

With competition increasing and customer numbers soaring, service providers in Africa are increasingly adopting managed services strategies to evolve their business support systems operations and increase operational efficiencies. 'We have a strong focus on continuing to grow our managed services offerings and to deepen our engagement with a growing customer base covering more countries and multiple solutions,' says Chalapathy.

'Our long-term vision is to move towards providing a comprehensive managed services approach to optimise business assurance systems that include systems and services to manage costs, protect revenues and provide assured operations. This approach delivers significant operational efficiencies and also allows CSPs to focus on their priorities. We have the capacity to provide tactical and strategic capabilities to cover complex areas such as business assurance and advanced analytics in addition to designing and establishing transformation programmes,' he adds.

Born in Mysore, India, and equipped with a masters degree in computer science, Chalapathy says his immediate challenge when he joined Subex was to increase the global customer market awareness of the value that the company's unique managed services model offered. As an integral part of the company's growth plan, the concept has come to contribute a significant portion of Subex's business.

The future

'We see increased interest in our industry-leading ROC and managed services offerings. For that reason we're going to focus on these core opportunities, and invest substantially in solutions and enhancements for them,' says Chalapathy. 'Our managed services programme has gained acceptance across nine major countries. We've landed three big international deals since April and our revenue from the managed services offering already accounts for 40% of our total revenue.'

Subex's list of partners includes the top names in systems integration, equipment sales and technology providers in the telecoms world – Ericsson, Accenture, IBM and Wipro, to name a few.

'Our industry-leading solutions and managed services approach help customers to scale up the operational maturity model – in other words to move from detection to prevention and optimisation,' says Chalapathy. 'We foresee running the entire operational side for some of our customers, and we're positive that managed services will contribute significantly to our revenue stream in the long run.'

A particular source of pride for Chalapathy has been growth in the company's order book and the value delivered to CSPs through the managed services programme. An engagement with the major CSP resulted in detecting revenue leakage to the tune of US\$15 million within a short time and ROI rates of less than eight months. ●