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## Helping CSPs Succeed in 2022 and Beyond

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While most of the world was primarily working and studying at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, CSPs provided essential connectivity and services to businesses and consumers. They had to prioritize customer engagement to overcome the challenges of this massive societal shift and connect people on an unprecedented scale. They delayed disconnections, extended payment deadlines, and provided free connectivity to schools and underserved communities. And as CSPs focused more on customer engagement, their success grew.



CSPs must continue to focus on their customers to maintain growth as the world moves toward achieving economic recovery and “the new normal” in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Comprehensive digital transformation to modernize BSS/OSS will be an integral part of supporting greater customer engagement. It will enable a shift away from monolithic software deployments and create more agile environments to benefit both operators and customers through omnichannel digital journeys with a seamless and personalized experience.

In an industry as dynamic as communications, it can be difficult to fully predict future trends. However, it’s clear that successful companies will have one thing in common—they will be disruptors. They will put pressure on traditional industry players to rethink the role of their BSS/OSS in changing their business models and networks for greater customer engagement.

Here are the key areas where CSPs should focus in 2022.

### A platform approach

The search for industry revenue growth is firmly on the B2B side of CSP business, and new network technologies for 5G are stimulating a wave of opportunities with enterprises. We also see operators trying to create innovative 5G pricing models for the consumer segment. We see certain operators pushing out bundled cloud applications like bundled cloud gaming, 3D shopping, and more with their 5G offerings to consumer segments, enticing them to pay extra for 5G services. CSPs will invest in platforms with cloud-native applications, which will allow them to fully leverage these new revenue streams.

The platform approach provides a rich and automated interface to consumers and enterprises through standardized APIs and simplifies the adoption of next-generation network technology. We expect CSPs to invest in building a digital platform to accelerate partner-driven revenue opportunities and drive efficiency and collaboration by digitalizing internal IT. The future of work demands efficiency and process inefficiencies lead to suboptimal outcomes. Hence, this platform needs to incorporate automation tools, AI, digital collaboration, virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), and more to help the operator's internal IT team to increase their process efficiency to achieve profitable outcomes.

## Edge automation and monetization

Edge technology and MEC apps are already transforming many industries, such as manufacturing, retail, smart cities, and transportation. In fact, COVID-19 accelerated adoption of edge technologies to avoid personal contact and maximize process automation. Major retail companies have equipped more of their stores with self-service checkouts, and transportation hubs are using facial recognition and temperature checks to monitor traveler activity and issue COVID-19 alerts.

CSPs are using edge cloud and 5G to diversify into new markets and provide customers with greater value through new MEC services. However, MEC applications can reside on multiple edge hosts in multiple locations and may use both CSP and hyperscaler edge cloud platforms. MEC services are therefore highly complex and have stringent latency and performance requirements.

CSPs will need to invest in E2E MEC service orchestration to effectively automate edge cloud. These solutions must be placed above RAN, MEC, transport and core domain orchestrators and automate the E2E MEC service lifecycle, including assurance and continuous optimization, to prepare the entire network for on-demand service delivery, latency, and speed.

The success of edge services will depend on the ability of CSPs to monetize these new digital services efficiently and rapidly. CSPs need to invest in digital BSS solutions that can support ultra-low latency charging and distributed rating and charging to many thousands of edge sites. Support of slice-based and cross-slice charging scenarios, cost-efficient support of multi-tenant charging requirements and ability to scale on-demand to support growth in number of subscriptions and devices are key characteristics that need to be supported by next-generation digital BSS solutions.

## B2B and B2B2X models

These models provide efficient and scalable processes for engaging with customers and partners while also enabling knowledge-sharing across organizations. Effectively implementing B2B and B2B2X models requires industry knowledge of targeted verticals with a comprehensive understanding of their strategic priorities, digitalization needs and unique business challenges. In this context, we see CSPs investing in standalone 5G and 5G private networks to serve their enterprise customers better. To maximize revenue opportunities from enterprises, mobile operators will need to build vertical sector capabilities or partner with companies with sector-specific knowledge. Each sector will likely have a custom set of needs and applications, each requiring a different combination of performance attributes such as speed, latency, and reliability.

Future sales in the enterprise segment will also require a more consultative approach to foster greater collaboration in addressing enterprise pain points, especially integrating new systems into existing IT environments. CSPs will need to build consulting and system integration capabilities either in-house or through partnerships.

CSPs are targeting the profitable yet demanding business segment as they continue to seek alternative revenue streams. Forward-thinking CSPs are combining cloud and mobility capabilities to enhance services for this segment and meet the demand for services anytime and anywhere on any device. CSPs are focusing on offering business customers a wide range of services, such as enabling threshold alerts, setting customer spending limits, broadening customer care options, and expanding loyalty plans.

However, CSPs will need to first deal with their own operational issues before they can effectively meet the demands of business customers. Complex activities, such as resource optimization, service qualification and design, and discovery, prevent optimal service fulfillment and create undesirable fallout. CSPs must streamline their siloed BSS/OSS systems and focus on BSS/OSS convergence, E2E service orchestration and service management by transforming existing IT systems for greater automation and value-driven pricing flexibility. Creating a single view of the customer by simplifying and streamlining their IT will enable CSPs to vastly improve business customer satisfaction.

## Customer experience initiatives

Underpinning all these trends is the need for operators to not lose sight of the customer by maintaining a high level of service, engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. At a time when service offerings can look similar from one operator to another, the only way to stand out from the crowd is by offering a superior customer experience.

Operators will need to embrace social, mobility, analytics, and the cloud to proactively identify and solve problems to reduce churn, launch new services and ultimately gain significant competitive advantages. The provider that manages to do this will be more efficient, more proactive, and ultimately more innovative than the competition.

## Looking down the road

If recent times have taught us anything, it is that no one can predict with absolute certainty what a new year will bring. However, one thing is certain: the communications industry will look very different in 2022. CSPs will need to adopt new ways of looking at networks, creating and managing services, and providing the best experience possible. The only way they can achieve these goals is by having the right BSS/OSS architecture in place to develop, deliver and monetize new technologies in disruptive business models.