US-based Ciena is a global provider of networking equipment, software and services supporting the delivery and transport of voice, video and data services. The company is focused on tapping business opportunities offered by the growing broadband and smartphone market in India.

In an interview with tele.net.in, Ryan Perera, country head, Ciena talk about company's business plans in India and key industry trends.

Excerpts…

What are the business opportunities offered by the Indian market?

The Indian telecom market will continue to witness growth in the mobile broadband and the smartphone segment. With the Indian regulatory policies looking relatively stable and the operators focusing on 3G and 4G network expansion - companies like Ciena expect several business opportunities as a supplier for mobile backhaul technology. We see ourselveves playing a key role in helping operators address the demand for data services.

The company is focused on promoting its optical transport and converged packet optical products in India.

What are going to be the company's focus areas in 2013?

We have aligned the company's product development initiatives and investments closely with operator requirements. The company will continue to invest in its OPn architecture, which combines a cost-optimised, programmable network platform with open interfaces and network-level software applications. We will focus on expanding our packet capabilities on packet networking and optical transport products for metro and service aggregation applications, optimising our core network solutions for application in metro networks. Ciena will also continue to invest in WaveLogic coherent optical processor for 40G and 100G optical transport across our portfolio and introduce 400G transmission products. We will also enchance our software applications, extending the company's OneConnect control plane across the 5400 and 6500 platform families. Ciena will concentrate on developing network level applications which automate network functions and support the launch of new services.

With increasing network complexity what are the challenges faced by the Indian operators in managing their networks?

Some of the key challenges before Indian telecom operators are:

Increase the number of base stations to address the growing demand for mobile broadband.

Re-farm spectrum to ensure adequate spectrum in the 900 and 1800 MHz spectrum band.

The limited reach offered by the 2.3 GHz spectrum band for 4G services will necessitate large scale small-cell deployments to accommodate the requirements of urban customers, and increase backhaul requirements for small cells.

Managing increasing congestion in the backhaul network as a result of higher traffic on the network

Moving towards resilient networking to address the issues related to large number of fibre cuts happening in India.

Overcoming the shortage of skilled manpower having expertise in network operations

What are Ciena's key offerings in the Indian market?

Ciena has a comprehensive toolkit to help operators address critical network problems to create new and differentiated services. According to the research firm Ovum, globally Ciena is at present one of the leading suppliers of packet optical solutions in the telecom industry.

Our strength is in delivering following solutions:

Converged packet-optical solutions which are scalable, programmable and automated.

High-capacity, coherent transport (40G/100G) solutions for metro, long-haul and submarine transport - allowing operators to quadruple capacity without laying new fibre or undertaking complex network re-engineering.

Automated OTN switching combined with control plane software for better resiliency, faster provisioning, greater network availability and lower costs.

Carrier ethernet solutions for mobile backhaul and business ethernet services.

Unified software solutions which help simplify cross-domain network management, and advanced consulting services to help maximise our customer's investments.

How big is the software defined networking (SDN) market? How best can service providers leverage this phenomenon?

SDN has the potential to unlock innovation and upgrade network efficiencies.

According to industry estimates the SDN market for Worldwide Enterprise/Cloud Service Providers will grow from about $360 million in revenue in 2013 to $3.7 billion by 2016.

For service providers, SDN provides a more agile and intelligent network that can be programmed to allocate bandwidth from a shared pool of resources where and when capacity is

needed. SDN leverages a centralised controller which acts as the “brains” of the network and, oversees and supervises the entire network and instructs the switches how to create new paths to handle different flows as per the requirement.

An SDN-enabled service provider packet network can also be made more reliable and stable through globally computed, deterministic restoration graphs. Global network control combined with real-time analytics leads to enhanced service quality with fewer resources.

Ciena has solutions to support SDN. For example, Ciena’s V-WAN Hypervisor offers a functioning SDN network control layer, given its support of automated, “OPn” application programming interface (API) interactions with network-driving applications. The V-WAN Hypervisor manipulates a Ciena-powered network through direct software linkages to cloud orchestration software systems to deliver network performance-on-demand. In addition, Ciena will deliver OpenFlow on our packet portfolio, specifically the 5400 product family, including the 5430 and the 5410 as well as in our 5100 family, the 5160 and 5142.

Ciena is aggressively embracing openness at both API levels - business applications to network control software, and network control software to network physical equipment - because we firmly believe that openness is the most critical attribute of SDN.

How is cloud computing going to change the landscape of communications industry?

Gartner forecasts that the public cloud services will grow 18.5 per cent in 2013 to total $131 billion worldwide, up from $111 billion in 2012. From 2013 through 2016, Gartner predicts $677 billion will be spent on cloud services worldwide. Gartner further states the highest growth rate for cloud services is coming from the emerging regions, such as Indonesia and India.

At present cloud services are being delivered by a mix of providers - “New Service Providers”, ie leading operators like Bharti Airtel and Reliance Globalcom, data center infrastructure providers like netmagic or Tulip Telecom and global firms like Amazon or Google. Further, companies like HP, Oracle and IBM are also trying to transform themselves into cloud providers using the full suite of technology that they have on offer.

What are the trends that you foresee in the Indian telecom market?

We expect operators in India to begin evolving their networks to include 200G DWDM and higher performance, intelligent cloud connections. Additionally, service providers will realise that the resource of “connect” is every bit as important as the compute and store resources, and network operators will begin to virtualise their networks to achieve higher utilisation rates. Since the big data centres need to talk to each other, the network will become much more important.

Additionally, both network operators and enterprise will look to SDN to provide virtual networking both through intra and inter-data centres. Going forward, Indian operators will continue to undertake network modernisation initiatives to achieve better cost and operational efficiencies and to meet increasing bandwidth demands.

Operators are increasingly looking for very cost effective, highly efficient packet microwave as well as carrier ethernet-based optical backhaul solutions.

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