

As managing director, service provider business, Cisco India & SAARC, Sanjay Kaul's key challenge is to help the company tap the new opportunities in the ICT space. His mission is to help drive positive business outcomes for his clients, for example, service providers through innovative network solutions, which include the government's Digital India and Smart Cities projects.

Commenting on the sector, he says, "In India and globally, we can see three key trends. First, there has been a shift in user behaviour that is driven by social media. Second, the mobile/ICT is becoming a tool to transform businesses, and third, data analytics has become the key differentiator for businesses."

Kaul has been involved in the ICT space for over 22 years and worked with global majors like BT Consulting, the TeliaSonera Group and Ericsson across various countries. Before joining Cisco in 2014, he was VP and head of Bharti Business at Ericsson.

Kaul recalls his most memorable assignment as his stint in South Africa, when, as a part of the Ericsson leadership team for sub-Saharan Africa, he developed an innovative product, "Dynamic Discounting". South Africa then had low mobile penetration due to high tariffs. The ground-breaking product enabled operators to offer discounts of up to 98 per cent during non-peak hours, improving network utilisation and reducing capex, while benefitting users through lower tariffs. The assignment inspired Kaul to write a book titled, Business Models for Sustainable Telcoms Growth in Developing Economies. He's passionate about the ICT industry given its impact on businesses and society

Kaul's management style varies from democratic to transformational, based on the demands of the assignment. A few years back, he was given an assignment that required massive change management: he had to let go of people and shut down unprofitable products. His management style needed to be firm and unyielding. Currently, he exercises a more transformational style, understanding his team's individual strengths, and helping them achieve growth. His key strength is that he can look beyond short-term goals and see the big picture in order to create win-win situations.

Kaul is an engineer from NIT Durgapur and holds a degree in management from the Harvard School of Business, USA. At present, he lives in India with his wife, his mother and his two daughters. He enjoys participating in marathons and likes to play golf occasionally.

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