In the early years of the new millennium, Sify Technologies, India's first private internet service provider, identified the enterprise segment as the target audience for its business growth in the Indian as well as international markets, a strategy that yielded rich dividends for the company. Today, Sify is one of the country's largest integrated information and communications technology services company, offering solutions that meet all the communications needs of enterprises. These solutions are delivered over a common telecom data network infrastructure spanning more than 1,550 cities. The international connectivity facilitation is through the company's international open cable landing station and its seven international PoPs that seamlessly connect North America, the UK and Singapore. The company's clientele includes 8,500 enterprises across all tiers of businesses, both horizontal and vertical.

Key offerings in the enterprise space

Sify has launched several services targeted at the enterprise segment, including managed network security solutions, managed Wi-Fi services, turnkey internet-of-things (IoT) solutions, network integration services and VoIP services. The company is amongst the leading players in the cloud computing segment, offering public, private and hybrid cloud services.

According to Daniel Alex, president, telecom business, Sify Technologies, the company's focus is across the entire enterprise value chain. "Starting from the origin of data in an enterprise, which is either on the cloud or in the data centres, we enable its transport through our network and support it with security and network management services, leaving the customers to focus on their business. And that is the differentiation that Sify offers," he says.

Sify's telecom-centric offerings comprise managed data services on the company's domestic and international network, and termination of voice calls over IP on the company's domestic and international partner networks. The company's hyper-scale network now connects 45 data centres across India. Sify's data centre-centric IT offerings include managed co-location services, cloud services, application-led services and technology integration-led services.

Over the past few months, Sify has made strategic investments in commissioning a 100G capable metro network in Mumbai. Also available are 100G capable networks in six other metro cities. In addition, the company has built a robust, high speed network between its own data centres and third-party data centres, making it a unique platform for enterprises to leverage upon.

Financial and operational highlights

Sify's recently released financial results for the quarter ended September 2017 show that the company is on a strong financial wicket. The company reported a net profit of Rs 203 million during the quarter ended September 2017, a growth of 29 per cent over the same quarter in 2016. Revenues grew by 10 per cent to Rs 4,840 million during the same period. Revenue from the data and managed services segment grew by 10 per cent over the same quarter in 2016, while the revenue from data centre-centric IT services grew by 24 per cent. The company's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation increased by 13 per cent to Rs 716 million. The capex during the quarter under consideration stood at Rs 452 million. Sify won several major contracts during the quarter ended September 2017. For instance, in the telecom space, it won a contract from a large single-format European retailer to manage the entire wide area network, security and wireless local area network across its domestic retail footprint. The company also won its first commercial contract for IoT asset tracking during the quarter. In the data centre space, it secured a contract from a central government department responsible for providing data centre services to key government ministries. The contract involves a complete technology refresh of one of the department's large data centres, besides providing managed services.

Key challenges

According to Alex, the telecom industry is facing two major challenges today. The first is that there is a dichotomy between the capital spend cycle and the rate of change of technology. "While in the past, investments in the technology cycle would be for a period of seven to eight years, today technology churn happens every two to three years, and committing and recovering that capital spend is a daunting challenge," says Alex. Another major challenge, according to him, is the constant innovation required to meet the changing needs of customers, which calls for building differentiated services.

Sify has chalked out various strategies to overcome these challenges. "We chose to invest in

only specific areas that would augment our businesses. Our metro networks will support the market needs in these times of digital explosion. We are also working on several new-age services like IoT and security, and other such products for enterprises," says Alex.

Outlook

Going forward, Sify will continue making strategic investments and expansions in the telecom and enterprise space. Given its customised yet scalable solutions for enterprises across verticals, Sify is emerging as an end-to-end solutions provider. "We remain invested when it comes to solving customers' problems, be it on the services or the access front," asserts Alex. Sify's constant endeavour to solve its clients' challenges and deliver appropriate solutions is what drives its business. This strategy, coupled with government initiatives like Digital India and the Smart Cities Mission are likely to bring in significant business opportunities, makes the road ahead promising for Sify.

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