

## Telepresence Gains Momentum, Needs More Awareness

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With companies eyeing cost-cutting in various aspects of business, including corporate travel, they are looking to implement telepresence solutions that can also help in improving operations and drive workforce productivity. As per Zinnov Analysis, even a 10 percent reduction in travel could save \$500,000 for a 1,000 employee organization. The market is moving from video conferencing services to telepresence, as it creates a live, face-to-face meeting experience.

According to a recent Frost & Sullivan report, in 2008, the telepresence market was reported to be \$3.2 million. Garnering the fifth position in the Asia Pacific market, India is anticipated to grow impressively at the CAGR of 42.6 percent, further increasing the share of India in the Asia Pacific market from 9.4 percent in 2007 to 13.9 percent in 2014. As far domestic market is concerned, it is pegged at \$7.2 million, and is expected to reach \$40 million by 2012, at a CAGR of 53 percent.

In the Indian context, the growth is largely driven by the need of real-time collaboration on the back of globalization and efficient use of telepresence solutions by the corporate to attain huge return on investments. However, more stress is needed to promote these solutions in the market, which are dominated by the SMBs. Vendors can take help of partners to make their solutions available, and to create demand and lead generation.

As far as targeted and key areas for these solutions are considered, government; ITes; healthcare (telemedicine) and education are playing important role. Furthermore, manufacturing; retail; hospitality and media have shown some good signs of traction. The growth of telepresence solutions in India can also be attributed to the increased broadband penetration in various geographies.

### Vendors:

Seeing the growing pie of business in the telepresence market, vendors are leaving no stone unturned to grab it. Vendors are taking the product innovation to a next level by offering solutions to suit the requirements of businesses.

#### Cisco:

An example, Cisco has launched its 1300 series. The series is designed for up to six people in a shared-use meeting room uses one screen and three cameras. The 1300-65 uses a 65-inch plasma screen, and is the first in a new series of products that takes advantage of existing conference room tables. Sharing Cisco's overall market strategy and products, Minhaj Zia, National Sales Manager, Unified Communications, said, With India becoming a key component of the global technology industry, telepresence has found tremendous acceptance amongst companies in the vertical. So far, verticals that have been keen in adopting telepresence are companies which have offices in multiple locations, nationwide, or around the globe, and can find it easier to justify the ROI of these solutions.

Furthermore, Cisco has launched public telepresence rooms along with Tata Communications and Tata Teleservices Maharashtra. With this development, individuals can avail these services on an hourly basis. Discussing the company's go-to-market strategy, he said, Partners are at the core of our business. It's of paramount importance to ensure that partners accelerate growth, differentiate their business and increase profitability using Cisco certifications, specializations and incentives. This helps partners define skill sets required to deploy and operate Cisco solutions, optimize the technology performance and to deduce deployment risk.

#### Polycom:

The other vendor, Polycom is also maintaining a balanced channel structure across India, support its partners through strategies and service support. Elaborating more on it, Paul Newell, Director, Strategic & Technical Sales, Polycom Asia Pacific, said, Partner and channel ecosystem is critical to our success and growth across voice, video and telepresence offerings. As the Unified Communications market is poised for significant growth in coming years, we see tremendous opportunities not only for existing set of partners but also foresee a more partners bridging the gap and playing a critical role across IT and telecom.

On the product front, the vendor has offerings for remote offices to the boardrooms. Its RealPresence Experience High Definition (RPX HD) delivers a combination of high definition video, audio and content sharing. Additionally, it constantly updates partners and educates them at regular intervals to allow them to serve all kinds of customers requirements.

#### LifeSize:

Segregating its market strategy in two parts (products and reach), LifeSize is engaging with leading system integrators and VC solution providers to extend its market reach. While offering partner training, the vendor also enables them to offer solutions based on LifeSize products.

Sharing more on this, Shivasankar K, Country Manager, LifeSize Communications, said, We'll be tapping more system integrators to expand our installation base to penetrate deep into the Indian market. We view telepresence solutions as a specific installation involving high definition video conferencing products.

#### Partners:

At vendors level, they are doing everything to educate and train partners on these solutions. Partners help the vendors in understanding customers preferences, their pain points and even the market trends.

Explaining partners perspective, Abhimanyu Gupta, Director, Actis Technologies, said, India market is growing; however, not as fast as people are thinking. In reality, the majority of the deployments in India are happening as a part of the global deployments. A high cost of adoption followed by huge recurring costs and the high bandwidth requirements are hindering the mass adoption. Nevertheless, the quality factor and the experience of almost being present in the same room, a significant cutback in the travel costs as well reduction in carbon footprints are driving the demand.

While talking about partners role in this market, he said, Partners can do value addition by providing customized solutions, and get recurring revenue in support services, as managed service providers play a significant role.

Talking about the trends in the market, Prasad Indulkar, Head (Video Conferencing), Enkay Technologies, said, It is predicted that IT, financial services and manufacturing will greatly take to telepresence. Besides, government and corporate sectors are driving the growth for Videoconferencing. The government, in fact, is at the helm of this as it alone bought around 40 percent of the total videoconferencing endpoint equipment in 2008.

Sharing more partners perspective, Mridul Srivastava, Marketing Director, BT India, said, We sell directly to our target customers, and offer end-to-end solutions, including the telepresence kit, bandwidth, system integration and managed services. We're now planning roll out the opex-based service model, which will help customers save on the capex outflow for the solution.

#### ChannelTimes:

Customers are trying to attain enhanced workforce productivity and improved operations by opting for telepresence solutions. Spending on telepresence is now allowing them to cut costs on other activities, and is allowing them to generate huge returns on investments. Although the penetration of telepresence solutions can be attributed to the vendors aggressive marketing and channel strategies, there're certain areas that are still untapped, and can offer additional revenues to partners and vendors as well.