



Cisco Systems
Podcast Transcript for Wipro: Cisco's Largest Partner in India
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Julie Harman: Hello, and welcome to this podcast series about trends, technology and business. For Cisco, I am Julie Harman. India has a long and well-deserved reputation as a leading technology capital. And within India, Wipro has emerged as one of the top three international IT service providers in the world. As Cisco and Wipro announce their strategic globalization alliance, Wipro's Vice President Achuthan Nair spoke to me recently about how the business of providing solutions is changing in a global marketplace. Welcome, Achuthan. Thank you so much for being with us.

Achuthan Nair: Sure, it's my pleasure. Wipro is headquartered in Bangalore; we are a 51-year-old company. We have been in the IT business for the last 25 or 26 years or so. The bulk of our revenue comes from IT services. We have about 60 offices across the globe. We have 72,000 employees, of whom 14,000 of them are outside of India. We are experts at implementing IT solutions with a global delivery model. So any times an organization has a business problem that can be solved, Wipro steps up and then we bring our best value proposition take it on from there.

Julie Harman: What business conditions are inspiring customers to demand new services and solutions?

Achuthan Nair: More and more businesses are becoming global, so an organization which was regularly only addressing the US market is now looking at the globe as a market so they would like expertise and implementation of IT expertise in marketable countries. Most businesses are becoming competitive, so one of the ways of meeting competition and differentiating yourself from the competition is if you have complete control over the information that comes out of your business. And because of these competitive pressures most businesses are trying to increase profitability by reducing cost and that's where we come in. One very brilliant way of reducing your IT costs is by using Wipro's global delivery model.

Julie Harman: What are some of the services and solutions that Wipro is offering to its customers lately?

Achuthan Nair: Implementing any kind of solution in information technology is right up our street. Once you're implementing a large solution there are multiple things that you need to do in the lifecycle of the solution implementation. It may begin with only the gathering of information required to implement the solution and at the end of it you may want to test the implemented solution. So Wipro is pretty much involved in the entire lifecycle of implementing an IT solution.

Julie Harman: Well, it seems to me what you are doing is providing services for a customer that, if they had to do themselves, probably couldn't do as well and certainly couldn't do as affordably. Is that true?

Achuthan Nair: Absolutely true. The pace of development of information technology per se has been extremely fast. So if, if it was fast last year it is faster this year and it is going to be even more faster next year. Which means that most organizations find it difficult to keep the skill set required in-house, they can only train so many people on so many different solutions before the pace really starts outstripping their ability to train their personnel. Whereas if you look at a service provider like Wipro, that is absolutely a core business for us. Some of our biggest investments are in training people and re-skilling people across these information technologies.

Julie Harman: What role does the network as platform have in Wipro's overall strategy?

Achuthan Nair: The network as a platform means that some of the work that is done at the application level now can be taken on to the network. Globalization is very much a mainstream part in most organizations. Home-grown organizations are now moving into geographies where they were not ever seen so far and, to make all of them work as seamlessly as they were when they were initially one city or one town or one country, it means that information technology solutions have to help diverse units collaborate in a much more meaningful fashion. This collaboration can be made much more seamless and much more effective by using network as a platform. Customers are wanting to communicate across multiple devices in a seamless manner. I guess it is customer expectation that has driven these developments and this evolved evolution rather than anything else.

Julie Harman: Why do you think Wipro is such a global leader? Why are you successful?

Achuthan Nair: When we entered into IT services we realized that we had to differentiate ourselves from the competition of tomorrow. So a lot of initiatives along quality were taken by us and which differentiated us from our competitors right in the beginning. So that's one reason why we have been successful. The second reason is I guess we have managed our people with lots of vigor. We have always said that we wanted to have the best in the market; we have given solid world class training and tools to people, we have allowed them to have a career path within the organization.

Julie Harman: It sounds like your intellectual capital is where you really like to differentiate yourselves.

Achuthan Nair: Well, absolutely. Our people are our real asset; I mean, today we can knock down our building, blow up our technology gear, but the people remain, we know that we can get over the hump and win the next war, so to say.

Julie Harman: How would you describe Wipro's relationship to Cisco?

Achuthan Nair: We have had a multi-dimensional relationship with Cisco. We have been their partner for the last 13 or 14 years in India. But from an India standpoint it's been a welcome thing for India's relationship. For 10 years now we have been providing engineering resources to Cisco so that they can build products that can beat the hell out of their competition. We are also one of the largest customers for Cisco. So all in all it's a symbiotic relationship and we've been able to work well together for our ultimate customer.

Julie Harman: What do you think is, is signified by that strategic alliance that now will be existing between Wipro and Cisco?

Achuthan Nair: It shows Cisco's seriousness with respect to the emerging market. That's one for sure. Second is it is also a validation of the investments that Wipro has made in networking technology, generically, and in Cisco technology specifically. The timing of this partnership is absolutely brilliant. The emerging market is growing at 40, 50%; developed market growing at 10%. So we see a lot of, of possibilities for Wipro to partner in the emerging market and grow the Cisco business there forever. So these two points I think are wealth of the future of this partnership.

Julie Harman: Now how long have you been at Wipro?

Achuthan Nair: Yes, I, this is my 17th year in Wipro, Julie.

Julie Harman: And so in that time you've probably had a lot of opportunity to see the changes in IT services and network infrastructure.

Achuthan Nair: Oh, very much.

Julie Harman: Tell me a little bit about your experience of watching this business change.

Achuthan Nair: Well, the landscape of IT has moved exponentially over the last 17 years. When I joined Wipro there was no real IT services industry as such. It sort of evolved over time, the global delivery model evolved, um, from the late 80s to early 90s, and it would probably take me a whole session like this to really share my experience of what has happened over the last 17 years, Julie. But it's been an exciting journey.

Julie Harman: Where do you think India is positioned as globalization evolves? Does India sit in a really, really good place in terms of looking at the rest of the world?

Achuthan Nair: Well I, you know I couldn't give a more unequivocal and emphatic answer than saying that India is absolutely well positioned for this. If you look at the data, you know that 15 years from today 60% of the working population of the world is going to be in India. If you look at another statistic, last year we had 500,000 engineers come out of Indian universities; the equal number in the US is 70,000. So, more and more organizations will want to leverage India to tap into this, uh, engineering talent. So I think India is uniquely positioned, next 20, 25 years perspective to be a leader and, you know, build value and develop for people around the globe.

Julie Harman: Well Achuthan, it's been an extraordinarily interesting morning talking with you and finding out more about globalization and where India lives in it. Thank you so much for sharing your time with us and have a wonderful afternoon.

Achuthan Nair: Sure, thank you, and thank you for taking the time out so early in the morning.

Julie Harman: And thanks to you, the audience, for being part of the conversation. To listen to other podcasts in this series, please visit newsroom.cisco.com. Until next time, I'm Julie Harman, for Cisco.