

Pipeline

Knowledge Is Power

www.pipelinepub.com Volume 5, Issue 10

A Guide to Transformation for Cable Operators

By Sanjay Mewada

Cable operators face unprecedented opportunities. Advances in technology have enabled them to transform from distributors of television programming into next-generation communications providers offering a vast array of content and services. New services range from highly targeted digital content to voice, interactive, and mobile services.

To take advantage of new service opportunities and remain competitive, cable operators must transform their operations environments. Transformation projects are complex, but the rewards are substantial — increased revenues, reduced operational costs, and stronger customer relationships.

The Cable Challenge

One of the greatest challenges facing cable operators is their ability to ensure that operations and IT systems can support rapid business growth. This requires significant infrastructure transformation. But what exactly does this transformation look like? What steps must cable operators take to undergo transformation?

Below is an outline of key operational issues that cable operators must address in order to achieve transformation — as well as suggested “Best Practices” for MSOs who are looking to take the plunge.

Beyond Voice. Offering Bundled Services: The majority of cable MSOs have committed to VoIP rollouts, and cable voice services are steadily capturing market share from incumbent landline operators. Bundled services are a powerful acquisition and retention tool that cable MSOs can leverage as they go head to head against Telco and wireless competitors.



The obvious services to add? Residential high-speed Internet and interactive, personalized services with content that can be customized. In the battle for the eyeballs, the next generation of TVs and electronics are becoming Internet appliances. Cable providers must make the most of this opportunity. On the business side they can add services like IP PBX, digital trunking, and Service Level Agreements.

Consolidating Systems: MSOs must manage a wide range of business, operations, and IT systems acquired through the mergers, acquisitions, and property consolidations that created today's largest operators. In addition, many operators have separate infrastructures for each of their services. The resulting system silos are difficult and expensive to maintain, and the lack of integration precludes end-to-end service views. As mass market and enterprise offers become more sophisticated, feature rich, and interactive, the demands on Business Support Systems will multiply significantly. Therefore, systems consolidation and upgrades to new systems that can seamlessly manage everything from routers to remotes and core networks to home networks become imperative. Adopting the next-generation OSS that can manage Network and IT infrastructure from a single platform, provide the ability to create service bundles on the fly, and provide a deep understanding of the service experience is critical.



Automation: Many legacy cable systems were custom-built. Manual processes, and resulting high fallout rates, must be eliminated so new services can be provisioned rapidly and efficiently. OSS is central to meeting this challenge. Using a service catalog and automating service provisioning and fulfillment, the right OSS can drive automation through the order-to-cash value chain.

Network and Device Management: Cable companies must be able to provision, manage, and inter-work CPE, STBs, and the proliferating number of home networking devices. The easiest and most practical way to do this is to ensure that the OSS selected for provisioning and fulfillment is capable of modeling not only "network devices" but also IT devices, TVs, remotes, home computers, and applications running across the Network and IT domains. New software integrates the OSS and, using analytics, provides a deep understanding of device performance. It can also capture user behavior based on device utilization. This becomes invaluable in understanding customer viewing and usage preferences.

Improving the Customer Experience: Competition has made service and customer experience management critical to success. Cable operators must understand how their networks and services

are behaving — but more importantly — how their customers are actually experiencing services. Correlating network performance to services and devices in consumer homes becomes critical. For the enterprise market, Service Quality Management (SQM) becomes a competitive tool and a source of differentiation.

Ultimately, by transforming their operations environments into flexible, scalable, and agile engines, cable operators can accelerate the order-to-cash cycle and create the foundation for delivering and managing compelling new revenue-generating services.

Not for distribution or reproduction.