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BRIEF PROFILE

Mr. Goel is responsible for driving the company's business strategy development and sales operations in the Indian market. He brings over 25 years' engineering and sales leadership experience with some of the world's leading multinationals, including Cisco Systems, Sun Microsystems and Asea Brown Boveri. At Cisco Systems Goel was the senior vice president for the Industry Business, Strategy and Operations for India and SAARC, and also led Cisco's Industry Business Council. At Sun Microsystems he was country director for India Business Operations. Mr. Goel holds a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering, and is an alumnus of Stanford Graduate School of Business.

STAYING RELEVANT WITH EMERGING TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR PARTNERS?

A channel partner who is often the first point of contact for guidance on technology adoption needs to be updated on all the latest solutions available in the market.

TECHNOLOGY DRIVES business today. The pace at which emerging technologies are vying for the attention of organizations is very dynamic. Advanced technology is no longer exclusive to large enterprises alone and is now within reach of small and medium businesses as well. In this context, a channel partner who is often the first point of contact for guidance on technology adoption needs to be updated on all the latest solutions available in the market.

They are expected to be aware, updated and tuned into market trends to be competitive, as well as to be trusted advisors to customers. Emerging trends like virtualization, cloud etc. is continuously attracting customer attention, making them turn to their channel partner for information. They also expect them to be aware of what will suit their particular need and how to go about implementing the same. It is now imperative for channel partners to consider increasing their knowledge and awareness as its directly related to new business opportunities and better customer satisfaction.

According to the Symantec 2011 Virtualization and Evolution to the Cloud Survey, about 57 per cent Indian firms have adopted server virtualization as against 45 per cent globally, while one-third of the 200 Indian firms surveyed, are discussing or are at a planning stage for private and hybrid cloud deployments. Thus, as awareness about these technologies increase, their viability and cost effectiveness will be crucial factors contributing to their adoption. The growing awareness however does not answer the doubts and suspicions they will have prior to adopting the technologies. Customers who are considering adopting cloud and virtualization require expert advice on its deployment and will look up to partners for technical advice and support.

Enterprises are also now looking at social media platforms for business networking purposes as they increasingly recognize its huge potential and virtually cost free usage. According to the findings of Symantec's Enterprise Security Survey, 2010, official use of consumer technology such as social networking,

instant messaging and blogs has become prevalent in Indian enterprises. However, enterprises are not adequately protected. The study reveals that 82 per cent of Indian enterprises use Facebook, while 54 per cent officially use web-based consumer email and 62 percent use blogs. Additionally, 46 percent of Indian enterprises use micro blogging tools, 69 percent use Google Talk and 61 percent use Yahoo Messenger. The widespread usage of these platforms serves as an attraction to cyber criminals who are always on the lookout to exploit any vulnerability they find in user's networks.

This means there is a need to protect and archive all this information for future reference. Relevant data protection technologies like archiving and eDiscovery become relevant here.

In this scenario, as enterprises seek information and clarity on these emerging technology trends, the channel partner needs to be equipped, and trained to be an expert.

In case, the customers do not get the answers they are looking for, they will consider shifting loyalties to someone who can help them.

Partners play a very important role throughout the sales cycle of acquisition, installation, setup, maintenance & also customization where necessary. Thus, it's very important that they are updated on new technology trends so, when their customers approach them with their specific and unique needs, they are in a position to address them adequately. In terms of increasing their business potential, with newer technologies being adopted, they will have additional business avenues.

Channel partners are responsible for ensuring that there is trust between the vendors and the end customer. They also need to be a role model towards building bridges in making the customer familiar with the latest technology solutions being provided by the vendors. Specializing in new technologies will help them stay relevant to the market demands. This goes a long way in building customer relationships, as well as increasing business opportunity. **SME**