Increase Your Market Share with NG BSS
What will you learn?

This paper discusses 5 best practices for enabling efficiency and innovation in the delivery of differentiated services and support to customers. It also provides additional suggestions about how BSS solutions currently in use can be leveraged to implement them. These best practices, based on the experiences of Comarch's customers, are:

▷ Enabling sales-driven product innovation
▷ Delivering a personalized customer experience
▷ Moving operations and customer interactions to the web
▷ Focusing on exploring market segments and niches
▷ Leveraging partnerships to maximize returns on core assets
Introduction

How can the strategic goal of any communication service provider – increasing the market share – be achieved practically in mature, saturated markets with significant competition from established players and new entrants?

First of all, no company can grow without protecting its existing market share effectively. This task can be achieved by management of customer satisfaction and loyalty, competitive benchmarking, and ensuring high quality of service. The second task – increasing the market share and entering new markets – can be much more challenging as it requires a comprehensive, bottom-up transformation. At one end of the spectrum there are mergers and acquisitions – rare, but spectacular events. At the other end lies continuous marketing innovation – regular shipments of small yet bright, differentiating ideas in areas such as product, pricing, market segment, distribution, and promotion. This kind of innovation plays a pivotal role in enabling growth, but does not require the development of products from the pages of a science fiction novel. It’s often more than enough to fix a small difficulty in a customer’s everyday life, increase availability and convenience of using a telecom service provider’s products, or improve customer experience.

Communication service providers often have a vision about how to approach these tasks, but there are ways to improve the effectiveness of executing them. Having already invested so much in next generation networks and OSS in recent years, operators need to monetize these investments. Their goal may be set on customer intimacy or product leadership, and their network may have the required capabilities and potential, but in terms of BSS architecture, many service providers are still in the world of product silos and fragmented processes. Hundreds of big and small applications forming the overall IT landscape make business goals difficult to reach and seriously constrain the operators’ ability to reinvent their offerings dynamically. They hinder attempts to leverage relationships with customers and partners in new ways. Overall, this situation can lead to stagnation and loss of market share to rivals.

Enabling sales-driven product innovation

Customers, especially in the enterprise segment, expect customized products and services – well aligned to their ICT needs, budget, and corporate goals in general. Thus, selling mobile subscriptions at a discounted price may no longer be a viable market strategy when the product is so commoditized and it’s hard to differentiate one operator’s offer from all the others.

Imagine an eco-friendly company as your potential customer. Given that all operators can offer a similar price, network quality and customer service, how can you win this opportunity? It’s by making your offer unique – aligned to this company’s values. Providing a conveniently packaged ‘environmental protection solution’ – for example consisting of an online conference product and a pack of mobile subscriptions for a predictable monthly fee and with an estimated overall CO2 footprint.

Bundling existing products into a tailored solution during the sales process makes your offer stand out and increases the probability of converting a lead into a customer. But there are still some questions that need to be answered. Does your sales force automation system support selling ad hoc solutions based on products defined in the billing system? Can your fulfillment rely on integration and mapping of products to customer-facing services and in turn to resource-facing services, to ensure fast and faultless delivery? Is your billing system able to put exactly the same solution name, price and solution item structure on the invoice as in the agreement? Unfortunately, for many service providers – even market leaders - the answer to these questions is no.

We spent a lot of time and effort to develop a solution that would help you solve these challenges. Our Comarch BSS Suite is now fully equipped with features that let you easily define and sell customized packages made of existing products, and offer them to specific customer segments. Such customer-dedicated solutions are instantly available for use in the CRM sales and ordering, as well as fulfillment and billing modules. Thanks to the centralized product management concept of Comarch BSS, such ad hoc product bundles are consistently handled across the solution – from lead, through order, to invoice – in terms of naming, pricing and business rules.

Delivering a personalized customer experience

Personalization of product features, customer service and marketing communications has a strong, positive influence on customer experience and loyalty. This potential often goes to waste. First of all, there are countless examples of customers disappointed at being treated in a standardized, mediocre way. Imagine you make heavy use of your mobile internet service, and receive a loyalty offer for contract renewal where you can choose between a pack of free airtime minutes and a pack of free text messages, but nothing else. Since you’re mainly using your phone for downloading content, social networking or playing games online, and only occasionally to call someone or send an SMS, such an offer will be unattractive to you, but may even be annoying. An ideal offer would take your profile into account and include additional options of free data traffic or free downloads packages.

How do such situations occur, with a complete history of customer transactions - usage data, payments, service channels
Without an IT architecture built around a centralized product catalog and capable of utilizing 360-degree customer information negative customer experiences are more than likely to occur repeatedly.

Interactions, orders, trouble tickets, leads and campaign data being stored in the service provider’s databases? With regards to personalization of products and customer relationships, this data should be treated as a ‘treasure chest’ and leveraged for the highest level of customer satisfaction.

What makes this treasure so hard to be effectively used by product management, sales, customer service and loyalty teams? It’s the fact that the data is scattered between numerous data stores, applications and processes. Without an IT architecture built around a centralized product catalog and capable of utilizing 360-degree customer information such negative customer experiences are more than likely to occur repeatedly.

But personalization of customer dialogue based on a 360-degree view and analytics is only one of many promising possibilities. There are also opportunities in policy management, pricing, bundling and service delivery. Take policy management as an example – regulators have taken care of some aspects, such as bill shock prevention. But customers expect not only more transparency in their service usage and spending profile. They also seek flexibility, to tweak thresholds and rules, both on a per-subscription basis, and within broader units such as a household or a company. Other examples of innovations through personalization include on-demand quality of service (QoS) adjustments, dynamic pricing based on network characteristics, or pick-and-choose TV channel packages. These opportunities also create multiple difficulties for service providers in terms of OSS-BSS data and events integration, configuration management through different customer service channels (including self-service), or setting up dynamic QoS-driven pricing schemes.

Comarch BSS enables a service provider’s employees to access and leverage a 360-degree view of a customer relationship. As a centralized system with configurable business rules, Comarch BSS helps you personalize customer experience by differentiating product offerings, process flows, service levels, and marketing activities based on customer preferences and trends. In addition, by using flexible data and functionality access rules, you can empower your partners - resellers, dealers and telesales - with the same information and tools your employees use, thus increasing coherence of customer experience across various channels. Comarch BSS also provides an advanced, user-friendly self-service portal for end users as well as telco managers working for your customers, to manage their personalized service profiles.

Moving operations and customer interactions to the web

Customer self-service and online selling have the potential to reduce a significant portion of a service provider’s repetitive, day to day sales and customer service tasks, including exchange of paper documents and costly face to face or phone-based interactions. Most individuals and companies are used to searching, buying and even consuming products online, not to mention fostering their relationships with other people on the web. An information portal was the first step in a service provider’s online presence.

Opening internal systems to customers and partners is the next step. It is a proven method for service providers to reduce the cost of customer service and billing. It enables them to offer customers better pricing transparency by allowing them to browse their bills, service usage data and detailed charges. This way, customers know what they are paying for, which leads to higher customer satisfaction. But providing such capabilities to customers is now becoming more of a best practice than a novelty. Today, the innovation and differentiation is in the effectiveness of tackling the key challenge of turning your web portal into a robust sales tool; when this happens, it becomes not only a significant source of leads and orders but also a preferred customer service channel.

Today, the innovation and differentiation is in the effectiveness of tackling the key challenge of turning your web portal into a robust sales tool; when this happens, it becomes not only a significant source of leads and orders but also a preferred customer service channel.

As a centralized system with configurable business rules, Comarch BSS helps you personalize customer experience by differentiating product offerings, process flows, service levels, and marketing activities based on customer preferences and trends. In addition, by using flexible data and functionality access rules, you can empower your partners - resellers, dealers and telesales - with the same information and tools your employees use, thus increasing coherence of customer experience across various channels. Comarch BSS also provides an advanced, user-friendly self-service portal for end users as well as telco managers working for your customers, to manage their personalized service profiles.

Opening internal systems to customers and partners is the next step. It is a proven method for service providers to reduce the cost of customer service and billing. It enables them to offer customers better pricing transparency by allowing them to browse their bills, service usage data and detailed charges. This way, customers know what they are paying for, which leads to higher customer satisfaction. But providing such capabilities to customers is now becoming more of a best practice than a novelty. Today, the innovation and differentiation is in the effectiveness of tackling the key challenge of turning your web portal into a robust sales tool; when this happens, it becomes not only a significant source of leads and orders but also a preferred customer service channel.

Among the issues of security, usability, performance, licenses or flexibility, one of the toughest challenges service providers face in this matter is user adoption.

Comarch BSS offers a user-friendly set of self-service tools for your customers and partners, making it easy for them to order, receive bills and manage subscriptions online. With the Comarch solution, thanks to channel-dependant product offering rules and pricing, motivating customers to use the online channel is going to become easier than ever. User adoption and partner productivity is also improved through dedicated self-service portal features for users from different customer segments - residential, SME and corporate. . . Cen-
centralized order management eliminates delivery bottlenecks and enables effective orchestration between order capture, fulfillment and product management capabilities, supporting fast provisioning of communication products and first-class customer self-service.

### Focusing on exploring market segments and niches

Deeper coverage of a market segment or vertical industry may bring new potential revenue sources for communication service providers. So does becoming an expert in a given field, or finding a lucrative market niche before competitors do so. Best of all is to be the only player there. Since such strategies require high organizational agility and strong IT support, it’s no wonder they are frequently best executed by market challengers – small, yet innovative service providers. They have the required flexibility to change their business model when their competition changes theirs, and to outsource the boring, low-impact business areas to third parties, while remaining in charge, staying close to their customers, and inventing remarkable products.

Can your company enter new markets and address niche markets as quickly and cost-effectively? Not with the burden of organizational silos and fragmented internal applications. These are flexible but inefficient, and require a lot of error-prone manual work, with maintenance costs steadily increasing and ever longer innovation lead times. While major business and IT transformation may be a suitable way for some operators to overcome these hurdles, to others it may well be unacceptable for various reasons. They prefer an alternative path – rolling out new services through deployment of adjunct solutions managed by standalone business units, affiliate companies or joint ventures. While major business and IT transformation may be a suitable way for some operators to overcome these hurdles, to others it may well be unacceptable for various reasons. They prefer an alternative path – rolling out new services through deployment of adjunct solutions managed by standalone business units, affiliate companies or joint ventures.

Affiliate companies or joint ventures. There are multiple benefits of this approach, including reduced financial and marketing risk, faster time to market and minimized total cost of ownership, dynamically tied to business growth. Fixed mobile convergence for SMEs, managed mobility services for multinational corporate customers, cloud computing or a multi-tenant M2M service enablement platform are just a few examples of services rolled out this way recently.

Thanks to its centralized product and customer management as well as flexibility in shaping business rules and processes, Co-march all-in-one BSS Suite supports innovative service providers in effective exploration of valuable market segments and niches. It can serve both as an end-to-end BSS solution for MVNOs wanting to implement new business models as well as an MVNE gateway for network operators and enablers who want to apply and automate advanced, multi-sided B2B interaction schemes in order to exploit the capabilities offered by Next Generation Networks.

### Leveraging partnerships to maximize returns on core assets

Maximizing return on core assets such as customer billing relations, customer data and the huge network, OSS/BSS and IT infrastructure expenditures requires improvement of both operational efficiency and transformation of supply and sales channel partnerships – on multiple levels. The resulting 2.0 partnerships are all about sharing – data, resources, and infrastructure, but also risk and responsibilities in the value chain – in unprecedented ways. On the network level, where there’s an almost exponential growth of data traffic, network performance is becoming a competitive issue. This is especially true in case of mobile operators. Although LTE and large fiber network deployments make it possible to provide enough capacity, they are extremely expensive and therefore not feasible for all players. Network outsourcing and sharing have become viable strategies for service providers to optimize operational costs and it’s not a niche trend (according to Gartner, by 2012, 80% of Tier 1 CSPs will be involved in advanced intra-industry alliances, similar to those undertaken by airlines).

In terms of what the network carries, a vast portion of traffic is generated by content and applications delivered by OTT (over the top) players – mostly internet companies having a direct relationship with the customer regardless of the network he or she is using – as opposed to traditional telecom services. Communication service providers treat them as new competitors, and not without good reason: as Gartner reports, by 2014, over the top players will have captured almost 10% of consumer mobile voice minutes in developed markets. Operators will be better off entering partnerships, not only in the internet and media industry, but also in other transforming industries such as utilities, payments, or medicine. As a result, old-new requirements will appear across network core and transport, service delivery and BSS/OSS layers alike. These will include convergent, network access method-independent service delivery, fulfillment, assurance and billing, cross-partner integration and multi-tenancy. Since the
lines between a customer and partner are blurred, products go far beyond basic connectivity services, and the definition of the role of a service provider in the value chain is blurred, legacy OSS/BSS product catalog, service inventory, revenue sharing, or partner management capabilities will usually prove to be insufficient.

The complete set of OSS/BSS tools delivered by Comarch fulfills the requirements of 2.0 partnerships and helps to achieve higher operational efficiency through integration, automation and flexibility. Communication service providers looking for more agile win-win co-operation models can leverage the fact that Comarch is both a software and service vendor with a stable financial condition, diversified product portfolio and a global presence.

### Conclusion

In the face of high network, IT and business transformation spending, ineffective BSS environments disable efficiency and innovation in the delivery of differentiating services and customer service. Modern BSS solutions enable efficiency and innovation needed to monetize these investments and to strengthen communication service provider’s position on mature, saturated markets. Comarch BSS supports marketing innovation of communication service providers with its open architecture, customer-centric approach, centralized product management, built-in business process manager and rule-based configuration on various layers.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this white paper, please contact the author:

**Pawel Lamik**
CRM Product Manager
pawel.lamik@comarch.com
Comarch is a leading Central European IT business solutions provider specializing in forging business relationships that maximize customer profitability while optimizing business and operational processes. Comarch's primary advantage lies in the vast domain of knowledge accumulated in and applied to our software products. These products incorporate highly sophisticated IT solutions for businesses in all vertical sectors. Comarch has a multinational network of offices employing over 2800 highly-experienced IT specialists in Europe, the Middle East and the Americas.