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**FOR
COMPETITIVE
CARRIERS**



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(Infra)-Structuring the Future



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The days of delighting subscribers with standard voice and messaging are gone. Today, smartphone adoption and the technology advancements that have succeeded it have created new competitors, increased consumer demand and disrupted traditional business models — leaving the majority of mobile carriers fighting for their place in the future.

Throughout history, the technologies that have experienced the greatest success have been those who have achieved widespread market adoption and then continued to evolve based on the consumer. This was clearly the case in the “*there’s an app for that*” revolution, where application developers seemed to pop up overnight to build new features to satisfy the daily needs of their users. This *is* innovation in action, but with the widespread innovation in mobile comes the need for the many to transform and adapt to the “*new way of doing things*” of the trendsetting few. Carriers now must evaluate their business from their network center outwards to their customer, and define a strategy for how to move forward and remain innovative.

One of the biggest challenges facing the mobile industry today is the speed at which change occurs

and the transformation that is required to keep up. By 2020, IoT devices will account for 24 billion of the estimated 34 billion connected devices online¹ and monthly global mobile data will reach 30.6 exabytes². Carriers already are experiencing the pressures of overcrowded networks and the stress of keeping up with innovative services being launched by non-traditional competitors. As the 5G-enabled world quickly approaches, networks will have to be modernized and more operational efficiencies will have to be realized in order to support it. Carriers that started as utilitarian, network-driven providers must now transform into adaptive, user-driven innovators. The only way for carriers to transform is to reduce the resources they’ve historically spent on building, maintaining, and monitoring their network by embracing cloud-based infrastructure and managed services.

Although the cloud revolution is not without its challenges, the innovations that have emerged from it have brought several opportunities to the industry. For instance, the ability to virtualize the IMS core and subsequent IP-based solutions offers carriers the agility and flexibility needed to become the proactive customer-centric businesses the digital market requires. Improvements in network efficiency and reduced CAPEX/OPEX also can be accomplished through virtualization, and the “as-a-service” model offered by cloud providers reduces time-to-market. By streamlining operations and focusing resources on creating better customer experiences and identifying new avenues of growth, carriers will be better equipped to compete in the mobile market of the future.

Almost three-quarters of the world’s population will be a subscriber to a mobile service in 2020³ and the demand for new digital services will continue to grow. Carriers can leverage their



infrastructure and core services to position themselves as the foundation of the new multifaceted digital ecosystem and capitalize on new verticals for growth. A real-time example of this type of opportunity already is coming to fruition through the transformation of messaging into Rich Communications (RCS). By combining the enhanced features of RCS with chatbots, artificial intelligence and plugin technologies, the new RCS-dependent ecosystem, Messaging as a Platform (MaaP), will enable conversational commerce and other, richer mobile capabilities and experiences. Consumers will make purchases and have conversations with their favorite brands without ever leaving their native messaging app, and carriers will acquire revenue for enabling the brands access to their subscribers.

Despite the inevitable changes in the telecom industry, the opportunities are there for the carriers who accept the challenge and take action. It’s no longer a question of how to get there, but how to embrace the digital revolution and take the necessary steps to thrive there. [cca](#)

References

- ¹ Business Insider: Here’s how the Internet of Things will explode by 2020
- ² Cisco Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2015–2020
- ³ 2017 global edition of the GSMA’s ‘Mobile Economy’ report