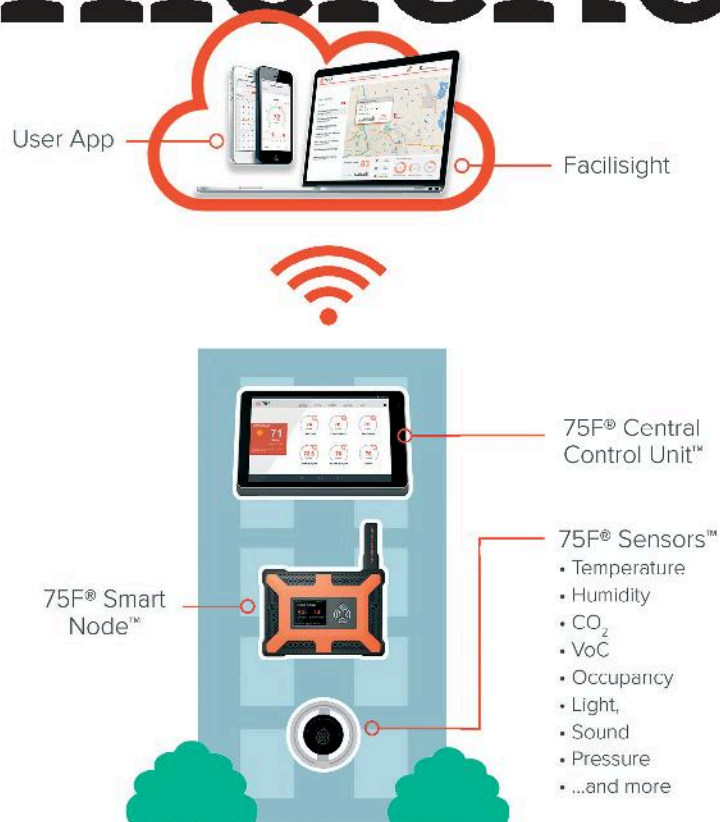


Powering Energy Efficiency



The mushrooming of numerous IoT-based startups in India and the entry of several foreign players point to the country's robust ecosystem and policy initiatives. Gaurav Burman, VP and Country President, India, 75F shares his views on how the future looks for this rapidly emerging phenomenon.



Gaurav Burman, VP and Country President, India, 75F.

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How can IoT help in creating smart energy solutions for a growing economy like India?

IoT is expected to be the largest driver of economic growth and employment in the next decade. In fact, according to a research report by Zinnov Zones, India has about 43% or US\$ 1.5 billion of the global US\$ 3.5 billion market. IoT and machine to machine (M2M) have led to the evolution of ‘smartness’ in all sectors and more evidently in the energy sector. According to Gartner, IoT usage in the energy sector is expected to grow to 50 billion devices by 2020, and manufacturers, utility providers, and consumers are taking advantage of information that flows from multiple assets.

Take for instance, IoT-powered building intelligence solutions that make retrofits hassle-free, and automate a multitude of significant tasks along with providing in-depth monitoring and analytics. Systems such as HVAC, lighting control and automation, security and surveillance, monitoring of utilities, energy management, and other specific tasks such as parking garage fare collection are efficiently managed with these solutions. It gathers and analyses data, and formulates and recommends future actions making the building automated and truly smart.

How can India leverage the power of IoT in manufacturing?

Commercial IoT is a vast field with solutions in manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality, R&D, pharma, IT, and intelligent buildings. Of these, our expertise is in the last one. However, theoretically speaking, a system of connected machines with the aid of IoT will enable higher efficiency and quick information sharing. Factory floors are no longer shying away from this smart revolution. The IoT platform in the manufacturing industry will be able to provide a system for capturing and analysing real-time data and information, resulting in accurate insights and automated management and control.

Could you list a few IoT-based projects 75F has undertaken in India and their impact on your clients’ businesses?

Having launched our IoT- and machine learning-based approach to HVAC, lighting and controls in commercial buildings in India in August 2016, we have been growing steadily since then with our clientele including Firstsource Solutions, Flipkart India, Bennett-Coleman Group, Mercedes Benz, Mapletree India and other leading brands joining US customers such as Border Foods, Magnet 360, Rockler, and Yoga Fit.

One of our most recent projects, an installation at Firstsource Solutions Limited, is a great example of how IoT-based building intelligence solutions impact not just the facility but the business as well.

Firstsource Solutions Limited (FSL) was an interesting site, approximately 80,000 sq ft running three shifts a day with 24/7 occupation, with highly dynamic loads. So, one of the challenges was to install our solution with minimum possible disruptions. We provided FSL’s facility with a cloud- and IOT-based solution that micro-zoned the entire space, providing nearly 45% savings, on their HVAC bills each month. But it is much more than just savings.

Which are your focus areas in India and how challenging has integrating IoT been?

We want to empower people to work better and fulfil their desire for comfort. We are proud that our solution, which can contribute up to 38 LEEDv4 credits, is helping construct a more sustainable world. 75F has developed a unique approach to HVAC zone controls—Dynamic Airflow Balancing™. Leveraging IoT design philosophy and the power of cloud computing, we have achieved what was once thought of as only theoretically possible—

Facing page: A vertically integrated suite of wireless sensors, equipment controllers, and cloud-based software delivering predictive, proactive building automation.

continuous commissioning or perfect air balancing. We are focused on establishing ourselves in a few verticals, for example, IT/ITeS, BFSI, healthcare and hospitality, in the four metros, over the next few years. We launched operations in India in August 2016, and hope to hit ₹ 100 crore in revenue by end of fiscal year 2018-19.

IoT is paving the way for next-generation building intelligence, energy efficiency, profitability, business continuity, optimisation and protection of assets or goods in a building, physical security and surveillance, and so on. All these form an integral part of today's business objectives when it comes to commercial buildings, and IoT enables all of these at a much lower cost and in a more user-friendly way than before. However, the challenge remains vis-a-vis adoption of these new-age technologies and awareness levels. Many Indian companies are still sceptical about change and are reluctant to investing in emerging technologies. There needs to be heightened visibility on the impact of IoT and how it can benefit respective industry segments.

What are your views on the availability of skilled manpower in the country?

For development and economic growth, every country requires the requisite skilled manpower. Human resources therefore are an integral part of a country's development.

However, as with any new technology, IoT companies too are struggling to find the right people with the right skills, which makes the hiring landscape more competitive and complex. According to a report by Limitless Mobil, some 45% organisations would like to see more IoT-skilled manpower working with them.

That said, I am confident in the Indian workforce to be at the forefront of new technology and to gain expertise in this sector too in no time.

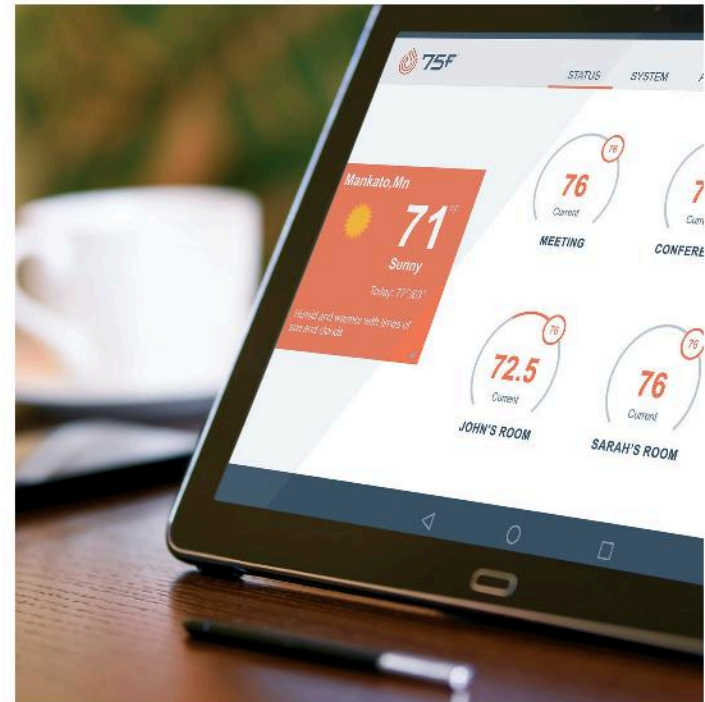
How has the government supported the sector?

The US Green Building Council was recently quoted saying that the green building industry in India is expected to grow by 20%, driven largely by environmental regulations and the demand for healthier neighbourhoods. We hope that in the years to come, the government will continue to encourage and support intelligent and green buildings.

How does the future look for your business in the country?

We are optimistic about business growth, given that new building deployments represent an enormous opportunity with the Indian economy appearing to

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be robust for medium-term growth. Additionally, we have a much larger growth opportunity with the existing buildings, given that our solution is retrofit-friendly.

With India being an emerging economy, there is a lot of potential for IoT in buildings and developments. As for intelligent buildings in the commercial arena, our market studies indicate the PAM (potential available market) for us in the US is approximately US\$ 5 billion and in India it is approximately US\$ 1 billion. As IoT complements our business model, we expect a positive growth towards intelligent business solutions. ■

Reference

* http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-has-43-of-global-iot-market-survey-117080700984_1.html

(As told to Ashutosh Gotad)