

Hi-tech retailing

Anil Bhasin is Senior Vice President of Cisco India and SAARC. An industry veteran with over 19 years experience in the IT industry, he speaks about Cisco's latest offerings for retail segment.

Retailer: What are the retail solutions Cisco has to offer the Indian consumers?

Anil Bhasin (AB): Cisco's Intelligent Retail Network solutions are tuned to meet the specific needs of retailers and offer comprehensive and scalable networking solutions. The various components of Intelligent Retail Network solutions range from a simple retail solution like the point-of-sale (POS) to enterprise-wide and media-rich customer interactive environments. Some of the Cisco's offerings for the retail sector include Unified Communications, Video Surveillance, Digital Signage, Mobility, Security and Data Center

Retailer: What are the scopes Cisco's in-store video-based communications have to offer?

AB: For the retailers, in-store video based communication systems can not only enhance consumer experience at the retail store but also help them in making a better purchase decision by engaging consumers with higher-quality, more compelling and informative content. It helps in tracking consumer behavior through integration with other IT system, and acts as medium for training retail sales staff and in-store advertisement.

Retailer: How responsive is the Indian retailers in upgrading technology?

AB: Modern retailers are realizing the potential of IT, and hence are willing to upgrade to technology



Anil Bhasin: offering integrated retail solutions

that allows for greater standardization, centralization, and control over application environment, thus improving overall productivity and customer satisfaction.

Retailer: Considering the existence of 4 per cent of modern retailers, what are the areas still the Indian retailers are not aware of where technology can bring lots of difference?

AB: The use of technology in the Indian retail market has mainly been limited to areas such as merchandising, financial and

accounting. However, retailers are slowly realizing the importance of technology and have started discussions with IT vendors to augment their business potential, with its help.

One area where technology can provide tremendous benefits to retailers is improving customer's experience at the store. In-store marketing solutions like digital signage, digital displays and content that can be remotely managed over an IP network can play a major role in this. They not only improve the consumer's in-store experience, but also influence buying behavior, and help consumer's make a better purchase decision.

Retailer: Do you make any special initiative to bring awareness?

AB: Cisco undertakes a number of initiatives to drive awareness within different market segments. Our Go-to-Market strategy for verticals is to develop and deliver industry marketing programs that include "connected retail" and solution portfolio information and detailed content for each vertical.

The Sales & Marketing Services Organisation (SMSO) is an internal group that supports Cisco's partners with marketing collateral and product literature that they may find challenging to create on their own. This enables them to focus more on effective customer servicing and revenue-generation rather than marketing and promotion.

Retailer: What are the challenges do you face in the Indian market?

AB: The challenges are mainly heightened consumer fragmentation, increased competition, growing labor costs and turnover, and complex global supply chain.

Interviewed by Suranjana Basu

