

Late last year, EMC opened their second only Global Command Center (GCC) and Critical Incident Response Center (CIRC) within the CoE. The Bangalore GCC and CIRC play a key role in mirroring EMC's facilities in the United States, enabling the company to employ a 24x7x365 delivery model of service and support.



Alok Tandon
Director – Channels & Strategic Alliances, EMC India & SAARC

EMC's strategy revolves around Channel Enhancement and Enablement

How has been the journey of EMC in the Indian market?

Since opening its India operations, EMC in India has evolved to be a critical contributor to EMC's long-term strategy by driving global innovation and revenue growth for the APJ region. We have had a robust Sales & Marketing operation, and are market leaders for network storage for the last seven years. Last year has been one of many milestones in India. We clocked our 1,500th enterprise customer, our 100th city where we have support services, and completed 10 years in India. Today, we address over 2,000 customers.

Channel partners are one of the key pillars of our go-to-market strategy in India and we have over 200 partners in India spread across over 40 cities. In 2011, EMC launched two "channel only" products focussed on the SMB segment – VNXe, an entry-level unified storage product and EMC Data Domain DD160 deduplication storage system DD160. As one of the fastest-growing economies and a country with immense human capital, India has been high on EMC's radar for several years now. Despite being perhaps among the last major global IT companies to enter India (when we did so in 2000), we have been very dynamic and focussed on growing our India operations.

To address the storage knowledge gap in the industry, EMC has invested in Education Services. Under its education strategy, EMC has designed a vendor neutral, storage technology open curriculum which is technology-based rather than product-based, which it currently

offers under the EMC Academic Alliance Program (EAA). Since inception in 2005 with Manipal Institute of Technology being the first one to adopt EAA, we are now 150+ strong with 60,000+ students educated. In 2011 alone, we have enrolled 45,000+ students and 50+ new EAA institutions.

With the coming of Iomega under the umbrella, how has the offering changed?

EMC's acquisition of Iomega represents the coming together of two technology companies to leverage each other's assets and capabilities to bring new and exciting storage solutions to consumers and small businesses in markets around the world. The addition of Iomega brand, expertise, offerings, marketing strategies and industry expertise has extended EMC's reach and focus in the rapidly-growing consumer and small business markets. Iomega is complementary to EMC's core business of information management and storage.

In addition to industry-leading products and a household consumer brand, Iomega brings to EMC innovation, deep knowledge of and established business practices for

servicing consumers and small businesses through all of the existing channels – retail, distribution, resellers, value-add partners and other channels.

How does EMC work towards strengthening of channel?

We have a two-pronged strategy for driving EMC's channel initiatives: enhancement and enablement. With regard to enhancement, we will look to increase the existing number of channel partners and significantly enhance our presence in India. We are also looking at improving our footprints in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. This is in line with our foray into the commercial and SMB markets.

The other key element in our partner strategy is in partner enablement. EMC believes that along with having leading-edge products, it is essential to enable the partners so that they are skilled enough to gauge the market and decide how to sell and where to sell. Every quarter, we conduct partner-enablement programs in 6–7 cities, to get partner sales force accredited and certified. What we really look at doing is to simplify our cutting-edge technologies into products which can be easily sold by our partners.

EMC is investing on building skills for our partners through education, demand generation activities and strengthening our technical support to them, besides improving incentives. Customers no longer are looking for box pushers – what they want are the solution providers. The award-winning EMC Velocity Partner Program is designed to make the channel's partnership with EMC as productive

“EMC's operations in India are also multi-dimensional, which is common to very few markets around the world.”

and profitable as possible. It provides all the tools, training, support and resources to increase channel profitability and advancement in partner business. We also have separate portals for our channel partners. The portals provide an excellent platform for communication between EMC and its partners.

What is the partner's role in the deployment of storage?

EMC believes the role of the channel is central to its success. Channel partners are instrumental as they are closest to the customer and can play an advisory role. EMC believes that along with having leading-edge products, it is essential to enable the partners so that they are skilled enough to gauge the market and decide how to sell and where to sell.

We are also working on enhancing partner relations to support the SMB market, align our incentives program to promote more VAR recruitment, and make training simpler (through online modules). A key to this is also to improve partner policies, processes and systems. We will also invest in demand generation for partners.

Do you see managed storage concept solutions taking off in India?

In this era of data deluge, the average cost of managing storage is three to five times higher than the cost of purchasing it. This has led to the rise of managed storage services which are becoming popular and coming up as a great alternative to conventional storage management. For instance, the concept is gaining ground in areas like telecom, where it is extremely difficult to assess what would be the storage requirements in the near future related to trends, projects in development, or pending business alliances.

Managed storage services provide on-demand storage capacity; monitoring and management services for clients' disk; data backup; and archive infrastructure in a security rich environment. Combining best-in-class networking technologies with world-class service management helps enable highly available, cost-effective storage management. The best part is that it is flexible, scalable, resilient storage capacity. It is on-demand and centralized remote management; provides

Nirmal Kumar J P Chief Marketing Officer Uniware Systems Private Ltd. **Business of Trust**

Associated since 2008, presently we are under Affiliate Elite partnership level. They deal in EMC Storage and BRS. "With the flexible EMC CLARiON/ Intel SAN, offering Storage capacities ranging from 2TB to 64TB, we make the move from server-based storage to consolidated storage easy and affordable."

"EMC is assisting us with decent margins. We work it out on a case-to-case basis." The trust relationship is fantastic. Very recently, there was an opportunity in the market where some 6-7 partners pitched for the same product line. "Turning real their words, EMC ensured that we got our price and backed us to clinch the deal."

Deepak Jadhav Director, VDA Infosolutions Pvt. Ltd.

Its all about Comfort!

The three year long journey of VDA started as a Tier II partner. But with passage of time, they graduated as Affiliate Elite Partner from Register partner. "Based on our revenue generation for EMC and the onboard skillset, we graduated as Affiliate Elite Partner." The privileges associated include access to the websites, extra training and immediate information dissemination about new arrivals etc.

The product is good, their team is good and without too much of a hierarchy one easily has access to the channel managers, which is very good for the channel community. Channel partners along with the EMC team form a family and work together.

EMC has a unique "Partner Advisory Committee", which meets every quarter. Where not only the distributors and various levels of partners come under one roof but also EMC channel managers and higher officials come and discuss the issues related to business from stocking, scheme re-imburement, payment etc.

"Actually the entire process if built properly, then there is no stopping from good margins. You have to conceive the idea as per customers' requirements and then deploy it." At present VDA is working towards positioning EMC not only as a storage brand but much more than that.



24x7 monitoring; and offers management and allocation-based pricing.

EMC Storage Managed Services provide comprehensive management of storage operations of an enterprise in accordance with specific service-level requirements. With EMC Storage Managed Services, a dedicated EMC team of storage management professionals assumes full onsite responsibility for all or part of storage environment over a fixed term. This team leverages ITIL standards and EMC proven best practices, proprietary operational processes, and management oversight during the service engagement. However, it is a nascent market in India currently and we believe that that 2012 will be a transformational year for storage managed services. Please stay tuned for major actions in this area.

From a margin and profit perspective, EMC is among the best in the IT industry.

How is your service network spread across the country (company-owned or franchisee-based)?

In 2011, EMC expanded its customer support services to cover 100 cities across India, a significant milestone for the company. This is

a mix of both company-owned and franchisee based. EMC's on-location support services in 100 cities in India include installation, implementation, maintaining uptime and troubleshooting. A key differentiator for EMC is its response time to customer queries: EMC provides onsite response within four working hours in all cities and towns; spares replacement are addressed on the same business day in cities where it has logistics centers (located in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Pune, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai), while they are addressed in the next business day for all other cities and towns.

In addition, all of EMC's products are architected and designed and implemented with dial-home functionality, enabling EMC's support team to address any potential hardware or software faults without impacting functionality and ensuring business continuity.

What is the evolution path in the future?

With digital information only set to grow further and faster, and the value of information becoming more so important, the importance of information infrastructure/ storage technologies will only increase in future. This, by itself, will create significant demand in the market. In such a situation, it is imperative to for channel to play a larger role and scale up significantly. The channel ecosystem needs to continue investing in workforce development, especially in developing areas like cloud computing and data analytics. Channel partners have to be fully committed to build the knowledge and skill base around cloud computing technologies and the prevalent market, speak the vendor's language accurately, and pass on the confidence to the customer. Least to say, the channel community will be the key to customer confidence and technology adoption, especially in segments like the SMB where unified storage and converged IT will be in great demand. ■

Syeda Beenish
beenish@varindia.com

