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Indian professionals cautiously optimistic heading into 2021



As 2020 comes to a close, LinkedIn, the world's largest online professional network, releases key survey and platform data to discuss the year that was, the sentiment of the Indian workforce, and 10 key predictions that will define the future of work in 2021.

LinkedIn year-end data shows that despite experiencing radical changes in the 'way we work', India has remained cautiously optimistic and resilient in the face of uncertainty, and overall confidence scores remained steady between +50 and +57 from April to November. Findings show that 2 in 5 (40%) Indian professionals expect an increase in the number of new jobs (up from 19% in April), and 1 in 2 (53%) expect their companies to do better in the next 6 months, going into 2021. This optimism also comes at a time when India's economy is slowly opening up, and the hiring rate continues to recover steadily back to Pre-COVID levels with a 46% y-o-y growth as of October 2020.

In 2020, online learning and digital skills took centre stage and Indian professionals pivoted to upskill themselves and stay productive. LinkedIn data states that the average number of monthly learning hours on LinkedIn Learning increased 3X from April to December 2020, compared to pre-Covid months of January and February. 3 in 5 (57%) professionals say they will increase their time spent in online learning going forward, as per LinkedIn's year-end findings.

However, working in isolation and navigating a tough job market over the past few months has adversely affected India's emotional well-being and financial outlook. As of November 2020, 4 in 5 (78%) unemployed professionals feel stressed, and only 1 in 3 (32%) Indians expect their incomes to increase, heading into the new year. This holiday season, 3 in 5 (61%) Indian professionals say they will take less time off, while about 9 in 10 (87%) say they will spend equal or more time working at their primary jobs this year-end.

Talking about the year gone by and the future of work in 2021, Ashutosh Gupta, India Country Manager, LinkedIn said, "The year 2020 was a disruptive year, and 2021 will help us tackle unforeseen challenges and prepare for new realities. Going forward, India will reimagine the future of work across 5 areas, specifically the workplace, careers, recruiting, business, and leadership styles. In 2021, skills-first hiring will be a pivotal trend, the CHRO will play a critical role, virtual collaboration will become stronger, and learning will be part of everyone's job. At LinkedIn, we will continue to help professionals navigate these changes and we will stay committed to helping members get closer to opportunities."

Top 10 'Future of Work' Predictions for 2021 as per LinkedIn

India will reimagine the future of work across 5

key segments: the workplace, careers, recruiting, business, and leadership. Here are the Top 10 'future of work' predictions:

PREDICTION #1: OLD WORK PARADIGMS WILL DIE

Only 1 in 4 Indian professionals were offered flexible work hours and well-being support during the early stages of the lockdown this year. This will change in 2021, as companies recognise new employee needs – many of which would depend on sectors and geographies – in an increasingly remote reality where commutes may soon become a thing of the past. Be it location, work hours or ways of working, flexible work policies will play a dominant role in defining a positive work culture in the future. Those going back to work can expect their offices to transform into spaces where professionals will gather for leadership and personal development, or simply to collaborate and congregate.

PREDICTION #2: TECHNOLOGY WILL SCALE COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITIES WILL BE BUILT THROUGH SOFTWARE

In an increasingly remote reality, employees want to collaborate and work more efficiently and facilitating this will require technology that offers transparency, and is easy to use. This shift reflects strongly across the Indian workforce as Virtual Events on LinkedIn in India have grown 4x since March, and India has become one of the top 5 countries creating Virtual Events on the platform. Globally, 7 million members attended virtual events on LinkedIn following the launch of Virtual Events in March 2020. Given this swift emergence of virtual collaboration, professionals will welcome the new world of work by expanding their tech skills and remote work acumen.

PREDICTION #3: PEOPLE WILL REIMAGINE THEIR CAREERS AND ENTIRE LIVES

Job seekers will continue pivoting their careers to work in different industries or geographies, as 3 in 5 (62%) unemployed job seekers in India report being open to the idea of exploring new career paths to navigate these challenging times. Professionals from impacted industries such as Recreation & Travel are found 2.7x more likely to look for jobs in a different sector. Further, remote jobs are an emerging trend in APAC, and India is found leading the region in terms of remote job application growth, which grew by 4.65x between March and May 2020. The new normal will also see the rise of 'solo entrepreneurs' as people are expected to use the internet to maximize their skills and talent, in a bid to reimagine their lives and careers.

PREDICTION #4: ONLINE LEARNING WILL SEE CONTINUED MASSIVE GROWTH (AND LEARNING WILL BE PART OF EVERYONE'S JOB)

Online learning will continue to be a critical tool in helping Indian professionals future-proof their careers. LinkedIn data states that the average number of monthly learning hours on LinkedIn Learning increased 3X from April to December 2020, compared to pre-Covid months of January and February. As per LinkedIn's year-end findings, 3 in 5 (57%) professionals say they will increase their time spent in online learning going forward. With this renewed focus on skilling, people are turning to online learning to build the right mix

of digital and soft skills, to upskill and to land new opportunities within the same company.

PREDICTION #5: LEARNING CONTENT CURATION AND PERSONALIZATION WILL BE A CRITICAL FOCUS

As demand for online learning picks up, curating high-quality content and personalized recommendations for individual learners will be a key focus going into 2021. This will help learners efficiently sift through the myriad options to find the right content, given the vast amounts and high frequency of content creation triggered by the increasing demand for online learning. LinkedIn Learning has seen over 60 new courses being released weekly, and the platform now hosts 16,700 courses across business, technical, and creative categories.

PREDICTION #6: VIRTUAL RECRUITING IS HERE TO STAY

As per LinkedIn's 'Future of Recruiting' report July 2020, 4 in 5 talent professionals in India agree that virtual recruiting will continue post-COVID (81%), and that virtual interviews will become the new standard (79%). Companies have dabbled with video interviewing and remote assessments in the past, but the lockdown realities of COVID-19 have sparked them to create an end-to-end virtual recruiting process for the first time. Therefore, just as hybrid workforce models are set to become the standard, a hybrid hiring process that combines virtual and in-person elements will become the norm.

PREDICTION #7: THE CHRO WILL DEFINE AND LEAD THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

Many CHROs will lead the way towards diversity, skill-first hiring, internal mobility, and remote work offerings. LinkedIn data suggests that more than 4 in 5 (85%) HR and recruiting professionals in India believe that reskilling of the workforce is very impactful in reshaping the future of recruiting. Internal mobility also continues to gain prominence across the APAC region. Compared to their 5 year average, most Asia-Pacific nations recorded an increase in internal mobility rates in 2020, with India seeing the highest growth of 5% to reach 13% through 2020. Fueling these trends, the CHRO will play a key role in the future of recruiting.

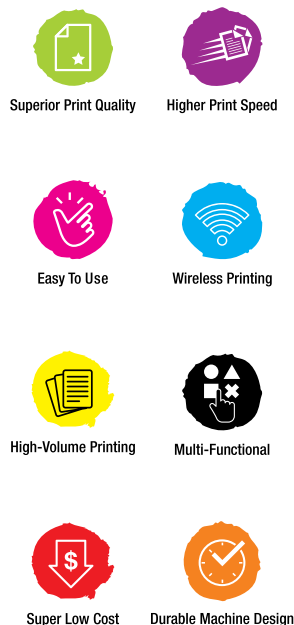
PREDICTION #8: VIRTUAL SELLING IS THE NEW AND ACCELERATED RULE; FACE-TO-FACE SELLING IS THE EXCEPTION

After a strong emergence in 2020, virtual selling is now gaining prominence and face-to-face engagements will take a backseat. Pointing towards this growing importance of virtual selling, LinkedIn data show that between Jan to Mar and Apr to Jun 2020, the time spent learning about 'Social Selling' on LinkedIn Learning increased q-o-q by 61%. Data also shows that globally, more than 80% of the Forbes Cloud 100 uses Sales Navigator. This online shift is expected to sustain in 2021, and in the years ahead, virtual selling will lead sales with more scrutiny on the why, how, and ROI of face-to-face meetings.

PREDICTION #9: DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING WILL START AT THE TOP

Leaders who welcome everyone to bring their authentic selves and support them to work will reap benefits like richer culture, higher engagement, more creativity, and better business results.

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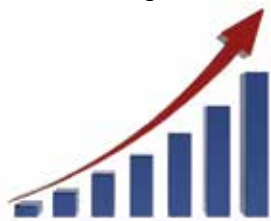
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Indian IT Services expected to post healthy growth in FY2022, sectors outlook stable

The Indian IT services sector faced minimal disruptions due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the sector is expected to post a 7-9% growth in Rupee (INR) terms; and 5-8% growth in Dollar terms (US\$) for FY2022. As per ICRA Research, demand for digital technologies and resumption



of normal economic activity will drive healthy growth. The industry's operating margins at 23% too are likely to remain robust and similar

to pre-Covid levels.

Other key financial parameters, RoCE (30-32%), Debt/EBDITA (0.19x) and interest cover (65.2x) too are expected to remain strong. Based on the strengths, the ratings agency has given a 'Stable' outlook for the sector.

Says, Mr. Gaurav Jain, Vice President, ICRA, "Demand for IT services has been mildly impacted due to Covid-19 pandemic on all end-user industries though some sectors like travel/hospitality, retail, oil/gas has been impacted more severely. However, higher adoption of digital services has mitigated the impact to a large extent and 90-95% work from home (WFH) was achieved for majority of IT services players by April'20 through seamless integration for Application, IMS and Analytics. The BFSI vertical was initially impacted as modifications were required in confidentiality

agreements with clients while the BPO vertical was impacted due to infrastructure constraints. The pace of conversion of earlier deal wins into revenues have picked up pace after some moderation during Q1 FY2021. The focus of new deals is now on cost take-outs, cloud transformation, virtualisation and digital customer experience, although this has increased conversion time due to Covid-19. The pricing pressure mostly seen in legacy work during contract renegotiations too has been compensated by new digital transformation deals."

On the outlook for FY2022, adds Mr. Gaurav Jain, "With 90-95% achievement of WFH and demand recovery led by acceleration in adoption of digital demand, the revenue growth for IT services in US\$ terms is expected to be flattish in FY2021 and US\$ 5%-8% in FY2022. Margins in FY2022 will remain in line with pre-Covid levels. IT services sector companies have largely remained in net cash position owing to healthy margins, moderate working capital and capex requirements. The trend is expected to continue in FY2022 with little impact of Covid-19 on growth and profitability. However, key risk remains in so far as increase in minimum wages, changes to eligible occupations, frequency and restrictions in issuance for H-1B visa remain."

About 82% of ICRA's 52 entities rated under IT and BPO sector are in Investment grade category, indicating healthy cash flow generation led by

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higher margins and low working capital requirements. Further with low capex requirements, entities in the sector have been generating free cash flows leading to net cash position and liquid investments. The downgrades have been primarily for entities which derive a large portion of their revenues from domestic segment with elongated payment cycles. During H1 FY2021, the ratings agency has downgraded only one entity which was already on Negative outlook prior to onset of Covid-19 pandemic. It has not downgraded or revised any rating outlook to Negative for IT Services sector owing to Covid-19 pandemic.

India to meet global tech, satellite majors to discuss spectrum



The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), with industry stakeholders including telecom lobby groups, original equipment makers and the Department of Space (DoS), and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) officials will discuss the roadmap for spectrum allocation over a decade.

In a notice, the Wireless Planning & Coordination Wing (WPC), said, "A virtual meeting for discussion on a roadmap for the use of radio frequency spectrum in India during next 10 years is scheduled on January 6, 2021."

The participants list for the virtual meeting is likely to carry local representatives of the US-based Internet and technology giants such as Google, Facebook, Apple and Intel besides multinational vendors such as Ericsson, Nokia and Samsung. However, Chinese companies such as Huawei and

ZTE were not invited, following the recent controversy over their inclusion in the fifth generation (5G) technology working group. The department has though not formally issued any diktat discouraging their participation in India's telecom networks as stressed carriers expect that any such move can raise their network deployment cost.

The department's frequency allocation arm would discuss if the changes are required in the current spectrum allocation plan, and what bands should be considered for the next-generation or 5G commercial rollout and the potential airwave range that can be used over the next 10 years.

Those who are expected to take part include telco groups Delhi-based Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), London-based GSMA, and Broadband India Forum (BIF) and ITU APT Foundation of India in addition to officials from the Tele-

com Regulatory Authority of India (Trai), Department of Space and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Both COAI and GSMA represent telecom operators – Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

The move is likely to allow more quantum of spectrum to launch commercial next generation services since the one recommended in the 3300-3600 MHz band by the regulator is insufficient which 125 MHz out of the department's domain. The first meeting will take place virtually on January 6 which will be attended by COAI, BIF, GSA, ITU-APT, Nokia, Ericsson, Samsung, Google, Apple, Intel, Motorola and Trai. The second meeting will take place on January 7 with satellite players including OneWeb.

Through these meetings, the telecom department is aiming to find out the requirement in current spectrum allocations along with frequency bands for IMT/5G and other uses.

The third meeting will take place today. The DoT has invited IIT directors, telecom standards body, TEMA and TEPC for this meet.

The telecom department will also deliberate spectrum issues with the home ministry, railways ministry along with civil and shipping ministry on January 11. This will be followed by another meeting on January 12 with the Ministry of Space, Department of Space and Ministry of Information and broadcasting.



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Margins have remained strong owing to lower overhead costs, higher employee utilization and INR depreciation



The Indian IT Services industry is expected to have short term adverse impact due to coronavirus outbreak. The sector growth is expected to remain flat in US\$ terms in FY2021 (compared to previous estimate of nil to -3.0%). The relatively better performance has been led by higher demand for digital technologies. COVID-19 remains an ongoing concern, but enterprises have shifted to virtual models that have pushed the acceleration. The credit profile of Indian IT Services companies is expected to remain stable.

Explaining this further, Gaurav Jain, Vice President, ICRA says, "The global spread of the coronavirus has resulted in simultaneous supply and demand shocks. IT Services companies have managed to overcome supply led challenges through uninterrupted delivery of IT services, through work from home model however, the challenges on the demand front continue to persist. The US and the Eurozone which generates more than 80% of IT Services export revenues will see their GDP contract by 4.4% and 8.3% (Source: IMF, October 2020 Update) respectively in CY2020. The first half of FY2021 will also see impact in the form of price discounts and extended furlough requests by clients as they restructure their businesses. As a silver lining, the Covid-19 pandemic is accelerating the secular trends of core modernization, usage of collaborative technologies and cloud migration as companies shift to digital business models to pursue work from home model which will benefit IT Services companies.

During H1 FY2021, ICRA sample companies (13 companies) grew by 4.8% in INR terms while in US\$ terms it grew by -2.3%, impacted by Covid-19 pan-

demical though supported by INR depreciation. In US\$ terms, the growth has sequentially improved with US\$ growth of -0.8% in Q2 FY2021 compared to -3.9% in Q1 FY2021. During H1 FY2021, INR depreciated by approximately 7.4%/8.0 Y-o-Y vis a vis US\$/GBP which supported INR growth (USA and Europe collectively contribute 85% of ICRA sample set revenues). Deal wins as well as net employee additions has also shown improvement in Q2 FY2021 compared to Q1 FY2021. The net employee additions show positive trend with approximately 11,859 additions during Q2 FY2021 compared to -21,130 in Q1 FY2021 and -5,379 in Q4 FY2020 for our sample set of companies.

In terms of verticals, BFSI (30% of revenues) growth is slowing down over the last few quarters with FY2020 and H1 FY2021 growth of 6.8% and 6.2% respectively. The demand for the sector has been adversely impacted by current macroeconomic conditions impacting the banking industry including sustained low interest rates, continued focus on cost optimization, managing their discretionary spends as well as insourcing by few clients for want of greater control. The BFSI vertical will be further impacted owing to Covid-19 induced fiscal and monetary policies leading to lower interest rates impacting margins coupled with impact of coronavirus on economic growth, lower credit offtake and other banking services. The BFS segment growth is supported by digitization efforts, cost optimization, regulatory, compliance and security driven initiatives.

Manufacturing sector which has been one of the key growth drivers would be adversely hit due to lower consumption with decline of -15.1% seen in H1 FY2021. Travel and Hospitality followed by discretionary retail are impacted as consumers will restrict outdoor activities to essentials in the foreseeable future. However, Life Sciences vertical is expected to see stable demand; the demand for technology vertical would be strong owing to core modernization and cloud adoption as companies shift to digital models led by compulsory work from home.

During H1 FY2021, operating margins has improved to 23.8% from 22.7% in H1 FY2020 led by multiple factors. Lower overhead cost (travel, administrative), improved employee utilisation, higher share of fixed price contracts and INR depreciation primarily contributed to margin improvement. Uncertainty prevails over proposed changes (issued October 2020) include revising definition of occupations and positions qualifying for H-1B visa, increasing minimum wage level and reducing tenure for onsite third-party employee H-1B visa categories from 3 years to 1 year as the same have been currently put on hold as per Court order. As per our assessment of the provisions, if implemented in current form and without considering the increase in realisations or other mitigating factors – the gross impact of all the provisions will be in the range of 285-650 basis points on operating margins.

"The FY2019-2022e CAGR is expected to be around 6%-9% in INR for the Indian IT Services companies compared to CAGR of 10.5% experienced over the FY2016-2020 period. With aggregate operating margins of ICRA sample set at 22.7% in FY2020 coupled with moderate capex (organic as well as inorganic) and working capital requirements, the free cash flows have remained robust historically. Margins will be supported by factors such as ability to modify cost structure with variabilisation of salaries & gradual reduction of high cost resources; deployment of operating levers such as higher share of fixed price contracts, lesser idle resources & automation benefits. However, these factors will provide limited cushion leading to slight decline in operating margins from 23.5% in FY2021e to 22.5% in FY2023e. The credit profile is also supported by net cash position with significant liquidity in the form of surplus investments generated out of past cash flows. Our sample set of 13 leading Indian IT Services companies reported surplus liquidity (net of debt) of approximately Rs. 1,652 billion as on March 2020 despite healthy dividend pay-out in addition to share buybacks in FY2020."

Health ministry warns people against fake Co-WIN apps, says govt-approved app will be launched soon

The Union Health Ministry cautioned people against downloading and sharing personal information on some apps named Co-WIN, "created by unscrupulous elements", that sound similar to the upcoming official platform of the government for carrying out the COVID-19 vaccination process.

"Some apps named 'Co-WIN' apparently created by unscrupulous elements to sound similar to upcoming official platform of Government, are on Appstores. DO NOT download or share personal information on these. MoHFW Official platform will be adequately publicised on its launch," the Union Health ministry tweeted.

The Co-WIN (COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network)

app, a digital platform created for real-time monitoring of COVID-19 vaccine delivery and distribution by the Centre, is almost in its final stages of implementation and hasn't gone live on Google play store or any other app store.

Meanwhile, states and UTs have collected data of healthcare and frontline workers who would be administered the anti-coronavirus vaccine on first priority and the data is being uploaded on the Co-WIN software, the ministry said.

The health ministry had earlier at a press conference stated that Co-WIN digital platform includes a free downloadable mobile application which can help record vaccine data. One can register themselves on it if they want the vaccine.

"There will be five modules in Co-WIN app — Administrator module, registration module, vaccination module, beneficiary acknowledgement module and report module."

The administrator module is for the administrators who will be conducting these vaccination sessions, it said. Through this module, they can create sessions and the respective vaccinators and managers will be notified.

The registration module is for people to get registered for vaccination. It will upload bulk data on co-morbidity provided by local authorities or by surveyors.

The vaccination module will verify the beneficiary's details and update vaccination status.

The beneficiary acknowledgement module will send SMS to beneficiaries. It will also generate QR-based certificates after one gets immunised, the health ministry said.

The report module will prepare reports of how many vaccine sessions have been conducted, how many people have attended those, how many people have dropped out etc.

The app will also send real-time data of the temperature of the cold-storages to the main server, it said.



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Wipro delivers a second consecutive quarter of strong performance

“Wipro has delivered a second consecutive quarter of strong performance on order booking, revenue and margins. Five of our sectors grew over 4% sequentially. We closed our largest ever deal win in Continental Europe. The demand environment is steadily improving, especially for digital transformation, digital operations, and cloud services. I am also pleased to share with you that we have moved into our new organization structure and are stabilizing quickly,” said, **Thierry Delaporte, CEO and Managing Director**. “Our margins are now at a 22 quarters high.



The expansion was led by improved revenue growth trajectory and excellence in operations with several metrics at an all-time high. Our Operating Cash Flows grew by 45% YoY with a significant improvement in outstanding receivables,” said, **Jatin Dalal, Chief Financial Officer**.



Outlook for the quarter ending March 31, 2021

We expect Revenue from our IT Services business to be in the range of \$2,102 million to \$2,143 million*. This translates to a sequential growth of 1.5% to 3.5%.

Strong Demand Drives TCS Q3 Growth Momentum

“Growing demand for core transformation services and strong revenue conversion from earlier deals have driven a powerful momentum that helped us overcome seasonal headwinds and post one of our best performances in a December quarter. We are entering the new year on an optimistic note, our market position stronger than ever before, and our confidence reinforced by the continued strength in our order book and deal pipeline,” said, **Rajesh Gopinathan, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director**.



He added: “Looking beyond the immediate business growth opportunity, we are tremendously excited by what lies ahead. Cloud is enabling a new class of boundaryless organizations, that can seamlessly partner and collaborate within larger ecosystems to create innovative purpose-driven offerings to customers. This boundaryless value creation, supported by the seamless fabric of technology enabled by cloud together the seamless fabric of talent enabled by our SBWS™, will redefine industry after industry over the longer

term. Our intimate knowledge of our customers’ business contexts, our strong relationships across ecosystems, and our continued investments in research and innovation make us their preferred partner in their growth and transformation journeys.”

“Our Q3 growth is a very satisfactory outcome of our ability to leverage the proactive investments made to capture the strong demand and be meaningful to our clients. It is a strong endorsement of our resilience, way of working and the relative competitiveness



of our products and services. We celebrated the accomplishment of our Enterprise Agile by 2020 vision during the quarter, and with SBWS™, we have a well-oiled location-independent execution model that brings in the resources just in time, efficient execution, and machine-led delivery governance that are delighting our customers. All these augur well to progress our 25x25 future of work vision,” said, **N Ganapathy Subramaniam, Chief Operating Officer & Executive Director**.

3i Infotech Announces Sale of its Software Products Business to Funds Advised by Apex Partners



3i Infotech Limited, a global information technology company, announced that it has entered into definitive agreements to sell its Software Products business to funds advised by Apex Partners, for a total consideration of INR 10 billion. The Software Products business will be acquired by a newly formed company named Azentio Software, wholly owned by the Apex Funds. The transaction, subject to shareholder approval and relevant regulatory approvals, is expected to close in early 2021.

Since its incorporation in 1993, 3i Infotech has been providing a range of IT services and software products to 1,200+ customers across multiple industry verticals in over 50 countries. The company operates through two business segments: Services and Software Products. The Services segment, under the brand Altiray®, provides consulting services, business optimization services and an extensive expertise in mobility, data analytics, big data, testing and application development. The Software Products business comprises a comprehensive set of core software products for customers in banking, financial services and insurance (“BFSI”) verticals and includes key products such as Kastle™ (universal banking platform), AMLOCK™ (financial crime detection and compliance software suite), Premia™ Astra (core insurance software), MFund™ Plus (asset management platform) and Orion™ (enterprise resource planning software).

Meritech to acquire Eoxys Systems India for its Push into IoT

Meritech Co., Ltd. HQ in Japan announced that it will acquire majority stake in Bangalore-based Eoxys Systems India, which provides engineering services and solutions for IoT; through its subsidiary Meritech Software Private Limited in India.

“Eoxys is delighted by the opportunity to become part of the Meritech,” said **Prabhakar Annavi, CEO of Eoxys**. “Joining hands with Meritech will provide us with unique ability to contribute towards this large industry movement and create a highly innovative IoT ecosystem. We look forward to being a part of this journey.”



“This acquisition will enable Meritech to strengthen its footprint in the IoT space. Eoxys will help bolster Meritech’s market share in Cellular IoT, especially NB-IoT and industrial IoT. We are excited to make Eoxys part of Meritech group and will continue to invest more in Cellular IoT market space”, said **Harish Sachdeva, Group CEO of Meritech**.



Airtel appoints Pradipt Kapoor as CIO

Bharti Airtel (“Airtel”), India’s premier communications solutions provider, announced the appointment of **Pradipt Kapoor as Chief Information Officer (CIO)**.



In his new role, Pradipt will drive Airtel’s overall Engineering strategy and be a key player in helping realize the company’s digital vision. He will be member of the Airtel Management Board and report to Gopal Vittal, MD & CEO, Bharti Airtel.

Welcoming Pradipt to Airtel, Gopal Vittal said: “Airtel has always been a magnet for top global talent and we are delighted to have Pradipt on board. He is an accomplished engineering leader and believes in creating value by enabling technology that is focused on outcomes. I am confident his experience will add immense value to Airtel’s digital vision. I wish him the very best.”

Karan Bajwa appointed as Google Cloud leader in Asia Pacific

Karan Bajwa who currently leads Google Cloud in India has been elevated to become the new leader for Asia Pacific, the company announced.



Bajwa will lead all regional revenue and go-to-market operations for Google Cloud, including on Google Cloud Platform (GCP) and Google Workspace.

Bajwa succeeds Rick Harshman who leaves the organisation for a new opportunity, the company said in a statement.

“A true test of 2021 will be how companies replatform and build on the cloud not only for resilience but agility and innovation, and I’m excited for the opportunity to lead Google Cloud’s business in APAC to maximise this next phase of growth,” said Bajwa.

D-Link creates impact through its CSR efforts in Healthcare domain

D-Link (India) Limited one of the leading networking brands in the country through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) wing has been working relentlessly on various social welfare projects with focused efforts on community wellbeing & sustainable development. In recent times D-Link CSR team has been working with various organization & institutes in healthcare space. These projects are targeted towards providing quality healthcare to those from socially marginalized and deprived sections of the society. In its earnest attempt to

bring about change through its CSR programs D-Link has made some significant contributions like providing Advanced Life Support Cardiac Ambulance to a hospital, donating over 8 Dialysis machines to various medical centers, supporting government healthcare initiatives including the PM Care Funds and much more.



Expressing his view on healthcare initiatives under CSR purview of the organization,
Tushar Sighat, MD & CEO –

D-Link (India) Ltd. said, “A small effort is all it takes to make a lasting impact. We recognize that our actions as a responsible corporate entity can lead to progressive change in the society that we operate in. At D-Link Social welfare is an integral part of our value system. Our commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is focused on initiatives that make a constructive contribution to the community. Healthcare is one such area that we have been extensively working on, and we look forward to helping those in need”

ViewSonic India Collaborates with Ingram Micro to Fast Pace its LCD Division

ViewSonic Corp announced its collaborations with Ingram Micro, the world's largest provider of technology logistics services and solutions. Ingram Micro will be an exclusive distribution partner for ViewSonic's LCD business targeting the Indian market.

The LCD monitor business in India is at a matured state and high end professionals and gaming professionals have been the key players in fostering its growth. Ingram Micro has commenced its business with ViewSonic

from 1st January 2021. This seamless partnership with a leading giant will append an additional benefit to the business growth



and prospects for a longer term. Eric Wei – Senior Director, Asia Pacific ViewSonic, said, “We are glad to cooperate with Ingram Micro, a reputed national distributor, to jointly develop business in India. With Ingram's strength and ViewSonic's advan-

tage, I believe we can create the value and share the value with partners and customers. Then eventually make life more convenient and make business more efficient.”

In this year, ViewSonic will be adding new and innovative products in its portfolio compelling its end customers. For ViewSonic, this partnership will be a significant benefit in reaching its retailers via one partner Ingram Micro. This sole partner will ease the distribution process benefiting both.

Savex Technologies signs a distribution agreement with Fortinet

Savex Technologies, one of India's largest Information and Communication Technology Distributor, announced that Fortinet, a global leader in broad, integrated, and automated cybersecurity solutions, has appointed Savex Technologies as a value-added distributor to further expand its business and security market footprint in India. The appointment builds on the strong demand for new solution requirements to secure the edges that make up the new network including the data center, WAN, local-area network (LAN), remote workers and cloud access.

Savex Technologies Pvt Ltd, which was selected for its long history of ICT distribution in India and its representation of many major IT brands, will work with Fortinet to target all market segments, including large enterprise, telecom and SMB. The new distributor will appoint technical resources to support Fortinet's business, including a dedicated team to handle both pre-sales and post-sales customer support. Savex Technologies will run marketing campaigns and conduct

enablement training sessions, to equip partners in smaller cities with the necessary knowledge and skills to sell Fortinet's solutions.

Fortinet's Security-driven networking, a strategy that converges networking and security across the connected environment is fast gaining adoption and market share in the Indian Market. From the core, to the branch and remote workers, and into the cloud it enables organizations to effectively see and defend today's highly dynamic environments while preserving an excellent user experience for employees and customers, keeping them relevant, competitive and resilient. Savex Technologies as a distributor will provide customers access to Fortinet technologies and services in over 80 cities across the country.



Jayant Goradia, Managing Director for Savex Technologies Pvt Ltd, said “Savex is pleased with its tie-up with Fortinet, and this partnership will help us offer comprehensive cybersecurity solutions to our vast and

established enterprise channel network across India. With the added support of our TAC centre, we will grow the business for Fortinet products and services, including solutions to secure hyper-scale architectures, SD-WAN, 5G, Edge networking, IoT, Endpoints, Critical Infrastructure and Operational Technologies.”



Rajesh Maurya, Regional Vice President, India & SAARC, at Fortinet said “The appointment of Savex Technologies as a distributor will provide our registered partners greater flexibility to work with Fortinet and grow their business. Savex will help us to keep up with new business demands in emerging technologies like SASE, SD-WAN, Network Access Control, EDR and Network Monitoring & Diagnostics. With Fortinet's security-driven networking fast gaining more adoption in the Indian market, this partnership will play a strategic role in business expansion by adding new customers and partners in smaller cities apart from the metros.”

Expansion, Diversification, Digital Presence on Top Priorities of Partners in 2021

After going through a roller coaster ride in the COVID-19 hit year of 2020, Indian IT channel is all set to kick start the year 2021 with hope and optimism. Channel partners say that the previous



year was instrumental in redefining their business strategies to adapt to the

New Normal. According to them the IT hardware business will maintain the growth momentum in 2021 as virtual and contactless engagement gain prominence and segments such as Storage, Server, Networking and Gaming PC (All-in-one) will stimulate the industry growth.

Key Learnings from Corona Crisis

The corona crisis and subsequent nationwide lockdown made several established notions irrelevant and one of those is a physical presence. The rapid adoption of remote working and distance learning has taught us the new way of engagement both formal and informal. In such a scenario, a strong digital footprint is absolute for seamless communication with target customers. Partners have also realised the importance of online presence and hence, creating a company website and social media handles is one of the top priorities of partners in 2021.

"During the pandemic time, we realised the necessity of an online presence to keep our business up and running. This year our priority is to launch a company website and social media handles to promote our business", Ankit Dugar, Director of Kolkata based Grapewine Networking Pvt Ltd., adding, "We are also contemplating to list our company on the GEM portal to enter into the B2B business."

Another key learning was effective and regular communication with customers. Partners focused on strengthening their customer relations to ensure recurrent business. "As not much business was happening in April, May and June, we decided to strengthen our relations with customers so that when the lockdown is lifted, they will first remember us for their requirements", said Nichay Gupta, Director of Mumbai based DataForce.

Partners also realised the importance of having a healthy bottom line during the pandemic. Hence, striking a balance between revenue and profit is crucial for the channel business in this year.

Business Roadmap and Growth Plans

Expansion and diversification are the key focus areas of the business roadmap of channel partners. Many partners are exploring to step into the growing PC and Gaming business, whereas some of them are focused on geo-expansion and B2B business.

"Our key strategy will be expanding our reach by offering new Enterprise-level products & solutions and grow our wallet share with our existing clients. Hiring seasoned professionals and training the existing team will also be our priorities this year. We plan to expand our team by 25% and increase revenue by 40% in 2021", said Amit Mittal, MD of Shree IT Solutions, Gurugram.

Gaming is another vertical, which witnessed a steady growth during the lockdown. Consumers prefer to buy Gaming desktops and laptops for entertainment as well as for work/learning. The demand for gaming solutions and accessories will continue to grow in 2021, hence, partners are building their capabilities to tap this market. Within gaming PCs, customers are opting for All-in-one desktops, which is currently the rapidly growing category within the PC segment.

"The demand for Gaming products and accessories has increased in 2020, especially, during the initial months of the lockdown. Gaming segment grew exponentially as people relied on online gaming for entertainment. We are increasing our focus on the Gaming hardware and accessories segment in 2021", said Tarun Aggarwal, Director of Digit Computer, New Delhi.

Partners also see growth prospects in the SMB vertical where the demand for PC, networking and server/storage solution is huge. Talking about the business roadmap, Debashis Kunti, CEO of Kolkata based Iserve Solution and Services Pvt Ltd, said, "The demand for desktops and notebooks is huge in the enterprise vertical. Every month we get thousands of inquiries and we look forward to being more active in the B2B space through GEM. We will focus on the government agencies and SMBs in West Bengal. Being a prominent RD, we also plan to support our local partners from WB and Jharkhand to crack the Corporate deals."

Expectations from Vendors/ NDs

Partners hailed the support received from brands and national distributors during the lockdown. However, this year they expect OEMs and NDs to be more supportive and flexible in terms of price, product availability and credit policies.

"We expect the vendors to give us the same level playing field for all the categories of products to compete with the online channel. The volume and reach of E-Commerce companies are much faster than the conventional channel. Therefore, we need to be given the same level playing field so that our business also grows at the same pace. We also want brands to give us the equal opportunity in terms of price and product exclusivity, which they offer to online channel", said Ankit Dugar.

Adding to the point, Amit Mittal said, "We expect NDs and OEMs to be flexible in term of their credit policy to help us serve more clients. Also, they should ensure the timely delivery of the orders so that we do not miss potential customers."

Apart from support in terms of price, credit and inventory, partners also voiced out the allocation of marketing budgets. "Vendor management allows us to build a relationship with NDs and service providers that will strengthen both businesses. The process should be properly structured so that it is a win-win for both sides. Secondly, distributor expectation in marketing should be based on a mutually beneficial partnership. We expect both OEMs and NDs to support us with product, market information, training and

marketing support, said Nilesh Shah, Director of Pune based Komal Systems.

Pointing out the serious issue of unavailability of stocks at a local market, Debashis Kunti said, "Many vendors have the policy of allocating certain SKUs to specific NDs. I think this is a rigid strategy and calls for removal. Such step creates obstacles in the way of partners like us as we are not able to fulfil customers' requirements due to shortage/unavailability of stocks. Secondly certain NDs block material in some regions and hence, we lose potential business. NDs should have flexibility in terms of inventory stocking in their respective branch warehouse."

Partners also called out prominent PC brands to fulfil the government norms for local manufacturing so that they can also participate in government tenders through GEM portal.

Support from RP tech India

Partners lauded RP tech India for its value-added support during the lockdown. The company was first to launch the Green zone and Orange zone offers to allow partners kick-start their business. RP tech India also conducted innovative campaigns to promote WFH and LFH solutions. All these efforts helped partners to liquidate their stocks and bring their business on track.

"The support from the RP tech has been fabulous, especially during the lockdown they supported us through various schemes and offers. They should make a single point of contact and help partners to manage buying from any branch at any city so that we can fulfil our multi-city orders", said Amit Mittal.

Hailing the RP tech team, Nilesh Shah said, "RP tech is the best distributor in the IT market and I am working with them for more than 15 years now. They are very flexible and helpful. Even local team and product managers directly work and coordinate with us, which improves confidence and help us to focus more on RP tech product line."

While appreciating the work culture at RP tech, partners also gave some valuable suggestions to the company. "RP tech India has a very friendly culture and we have very easy access to their senior management, Brands teams and product heads. They always help us to get business done at right time and the right place. However, they should focus more on channel business and give us preference in terms of business and stock allocation", said Ankit Dugar.

Another partner, Debashis Kunti said, "RP tech should increase stock availability in Kolkata and also they should reconsider their existing credit policies."

"We are a very old and prominent partner of RP tech India and our experience with them has always been excellent. They should conduct regular events for gaming products and target their marketing activities to youngsters who are target buyers of Gaming hardware and accessories, said Tarun Aggarwal.

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VAIO to Relaunch in India

Known for its extensive range of sleek and portable laptops equipped with top-of-the-shelf features that make for high-performance capability, the Japan-based company, VAIO is all set to make a comeback in January. Relaunching itself in the country on 15 January 2021, it is retracing its way into tech-enthusiast's hearts as it steps back in the competition with the Hong Kong-based Nexstgo Company Limited. VAIO Corporation will debut in India with its range



of premium, intelligently-crafted laptops. Collaborating with Flipkart, VAIO aims to regain its place and popularity amongst its customers all over again. The label is all geared up to foray into the sector to conquer it all once again. The brand that offers various services such as manufacturing, sales and marketing as well as servicing of VAIO laptops under the VAIO trademark in Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Middle East markets is now strutting in India to reimagine and co-create the future of laptops in the country. Fueling the interest of tech-enthusiasts, VAIO intends to re-secure its rapport as the pioneer of tech-savvy laptops.

Netrack introduces Seismic Rack Cabinet to protect IT equipment from Earthquake

When a company plans to set up an IT room, there is a considerable investment they consider for purchasing the right equipment as per their need, server rack cabinets being one among the most important. A single server rack can house a piece of equipment worth thousands of dollars. System administrators need to be sure that the purchased rack will be able to handle any



hardship, sudden force, vibration, or a physical threat that the surrounding environment might bring to the equipment. For instance, an earthquake is an uncalled-for event that's inevitable; and an earthquake-proof server rack is the right solution for the same. No matter wherever a company may be located, it would want the server and other telecommunication equipment to be operational at all times. To reduce the risk involved and minimize equipment damage, an IT rack needs to have proper seismic protection.

Mechanically Tough- XPG SUMMONER Gaming Keyboard, a Right Accessory for Extreme Gaming Experience

ADATA, a leading manufacturer of high-performance DRAM modules and NAND Flash storage application products and accessories, recently announced the launch of XPG SUMMONER Gaming Keyboard. The SUMMONER has an alumi-



num top panel with open-chassis design. Equipped with CHERRY MX RGB mechanical switches, the XPG SUMMONER keyboard offers complete game control, tactile feedback and the highest click precision with a 1000 Hz polling rate. The device comes in three variants: Cherry MX Silver which is fast and sensitive switches, Blue which comes in the classic and tactile design switches and the Red one quiet and linear switches.

ASUS Announces Z590 Motherboards at CES 2021

Following the launch of the Intel® Z590 desktop platform at CES 2021, ASUS announced its new Z590 series motherboard lineup which spans the entire spectrum of top-end ROG Maximus XIII, high-performance ROG Strix, durable TUF Gaming, and steadfast Prime motherboards. These motherboards are designed to maximize the full potential of the 11th Gen Intel® Core™ proces-



sors and feature beefed-up VRMs for responsive and reliable power delivery, along with enhanced VRM and M.2 thermal solutions. Comprehensive connectivity options include onboard USB 3.2 Gen 2x2 Type-C®, up to 10 Gb Ethernet and future-proof Intel WiFi 6E. In addition, a host of AI-powered technologies — AI Overclocking, AI Cooling, AI Networking and Two-Way AI Noise Cancellation — allow users to optimize their system with minimal effort. A full reveal of each series will be held in the coming weeks.

NETGEAR to Accelerate Wi-Fi 6 Implementation in India with the launch of Nighthawk RAX50



With the broadest range of Wi-Fi 6 offerings in the industry, NETGEAR, the leading provider of Wi-Fi solutions continue the commitment to advance Wi-Fi performance with the launch of a new product in its line-up of Wi-Fi 6 Router. With the launch of NETGEAR Nighthawk RAX50, the performance line will now join the fastest growing segment of Wi-Fi advanced solutions — Wi-Fi 6 systems. The Wi-Fi 6 (802.11ax) empowers with faster Wi-Fi speeds with reliable connections, so one can enjoy buffer-free streaming, faster downloads, and can add more smart home devices without slowing down the Internet experience. It also offers better coverage and, more importantly, has the power and capacity to handle the dozens of devices in the typical congested smart home. The newly launched Nighthawk RAX50 is a dual-band model, but it has 6 strings. It also has four LAN ports, so one can connect wired devices such as game consoles and smart TVs without purchasing an additional switching hub. Now, one can enjoy more comfortable home time with RAX50, including timeless web meetings and uninterrupted video streaming.

STL launches Garuda, a smart 5G indoor small cell

STL, an industry-leading integrator of digital networks, unveiled Garuda, a smart 5G Indoor small cell. With Garuda, STL continues to play an instrumental role in building an indigenous 5G



ecosystem and enabling its customers to provide enhanced 5G experiences in the future. A game changer for the technology landscape, 5G will enable many data intensive real-time applications. However, 5G signals will require closer proximity to mobile devices, creating a need for short range networks. Such access raises questions regarding coverage at a premise level. Garuda indoor small cell solution addresses these challenges by using devices as cellular access points, providing 5G grade coverage to meet the burgeoning data demands of the end users. STL Garuda offers a low cost and agile means for faster 5G readiness, improving the economics for Digital Service Providers and enterprises.

Turn a Touch Interface Touchless with Intel RealSense TCS



Intel announced Intel® RealSense™ Touchless Control Software (TCS), a simple solution for converting a touch-based kiosk or digital sign into a safer, touch-

less one while maintaining a familiar and intuitive user experience. With the pandemic affecting people worldwide, pay and check-in stations, automated teller machines and ordering kiosks could use the Intel RealSense software and camera to offer safer, touch-free options. "Intel RealSense TCS leverages computer vision

to seamlessly convert a touch interaction to a touchless one. TCS provides a smooth transition without changing existing user interfaces or writing a single line of code, creating a safer way of interacting with public displays."

Worldwide Market for Used Smartphones to Reach 351.6 Million Units with a Market Value of \$65 Billion

IDC expects worldwide shipments of used smartphones, inclusive of both officially refurbished and used smartphones, to reach a total of 225.4 million units in 2020. This represents an increase of 9.2% over the 206.5 million units shipped in



2019. IDC projects used smartphone shipments will reach 351.6 million units in 2024 with a compound annual

growth rate (CAGR) of 11.2% from 2019 to 2024. Much of the 9.2% growth continues to be driven by mature markets in which trade-in emulates a form of subsidy to push consumers to upgrade. Over the past year, we have seen rapid growth in trade-in programs and average selling prices (ASPs) across numerous channels. Premium flagship offerings continue to rely heavily on trade-in programs to make the upfront cost more affordable to consumers. Vendors such as Apple, Samsung, and Huawei have all implemented their own programs with very aggressive trade-in offers compared with other channels. Telcos on the other hand are using trade-in combined

with bundling (family plans and services) to get consumers to turn over their old device and upgrade. Although 2020 volume was not as large as expected, the used market still performed well compared with the new market, where IDC is expecting a 6.4% decline for smartphones for the year. As with our previous forecast, we still expect to see double-digit growth during the forecast period, at an average of 11.8%.

"In contrast to the recent declines in the new smartphone market, as well as the forecast for minimal growth in new shipments over the next few years, the used market for smartphones shows no signs of slowing down across all parts of the globe," said Anthony Scarsella, research manager with IDC's Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker. "Refurbished and used devices continue to provide cost-effective alternatives to both consumers and businesses that are looking to save money when purchasing a smartphone. Moreover, the ability for vendors to push more affordable refurbished devices in markets where they normally would not have a presence is helping these players grow their brand as well as their ecosystem of apps, services, and accessories."

Worldwide Used Smartphone Shipments (shipments in millions of units)

Region	2020 Shipments	2020 Market Share	2024 Shipments*	2024 Market Share*	2019-2024 CAGR*
North America	55.0	24.4%	94.9	27.0%	14.9%
Rest of World	170.4	75.6%	256.7	73.0%	10.1%
Total	225.5	100.0%	351.6	100.0%	11.2.%

Source: IDC, Worldwide Used Smartphone Forecast, 2020–2024, Dec 2020.

Announcing boAt's \$100 Million Funding By Warburg Pincus

Starting off 2021 on a high note, we're elated to announce that boAt has raised approximately \$100 million from an affiliate of Warburg Pincus, a leading global private equity fund focused on growth investing.

We welcome Warburg Pincus as a new investor into the company. This is a vote of confidence for our business model and growth prospects. The investment is great news for not only the company but for the entire D2C sector. The investment has come at the right time as we make efforts to ramp up our manufacturing and global supply chain", says Aman, co-founder, boAt.

As a digitally native brand in India, boAt has consistently been breaking barriers in a sector traditionally dominated by established global brands, placing India on the global map. In addition to solidifying its position in the Indian market as the #1 player, boAt has also emerged as the 5th largest wearable brand globally, according to IDC data.

Vishal Mahadevia, Managing Director and Head, Warburg Pincus India, said:



We see a compelling growth story in boAt and believe the company is well-poised to build upon the strong leadership position it has

carved out within the industry and stands to benefit from the secular tailwinds of e-commerce growth in India. Warburg Pincus is excited to partner with the management team of boAt led by Aman & Sameer in this journey and we look forward to supporting them through the next phase of the company's growth."

The investment by Warburg Pincus will enable the company to further fortify its leading market position, widen its R&D capabilities and product portfolio, and build on boAt's efforts to create and support a manufacturing ecosystem under the Make-in-India initiative. Avendus Capital acted as the exclusive financial advisor to BoAt and its shareholders on the transaction, enabling the manufacture of products in India.

As boAt enters the next phase of growth and innovation, we look forward to benefitting from Warburg's pedigree, collective experience and resources in helping us scale. Going forward, with the Government's support, we will focus on building capabilities in domestic R&D and



undertake vertical integration across both the hearable and wearable space to establish India as a global supplier.", says Sameer Mehta, Co-Founder, boAt.

How OPPO is Reinventing Glass Experience with Reno Glow

It will be true to say that smartphones are considered as an extension of people's personalities. Their phone is not an extension of how they see



themselves, but how they want to make an impression on others. Hence, the

looks of a smartphone play a major role in determining the overall buying decision.

Over the years, OPPO has designed and developed magnificent smartphones that seamlessly marry both humanity and technology together. Consumer satisfaction lies at the ethos of OPPO's product development and thus with the Reno series, OPPO has always introduced power-packed products as per the consumer's demands.

With the launch of Reno5 Pro 5G, OPPO will be elevating the possibilities of masterful craftsmanship which will come with the industry-first Reno glow design in a striking Astral Blue color.

OPPO's designers devised an aesthetic experience that is resonant with the Milky Way. The Reno Glow effect is an industry-first AG (Anti-Glare) Glass Process that shows class, giving a stunning look to the device. The unique AG glass process makes the smartphone shine like millions of diamonds embedded into the glass body.

Lava launches world's first 'made-to-order' customisable smartphone

Lava has launched world's first smartphones – MyZ – that can be customised and even upgraded



to suit the customers' requirement. MyZ is uniquely designed to allow customers to customize their smartphone to suit their needs, before purchase (being called as My-Z). The phone can also be upgraded post

purchase (being called as Z-Up). These smartphones can be customised in 66 unique ways with options of increasing or changing RAM, ROM, front camera, rear camera(s) and even the colour of the phone. This is unprecedented in the 25-year history of the phones in the world.

World's first 'Made-to-Order' phone

In a move that will redefine the smartphone industry and its use by customers, Lava announced this unique 'Made-to-Order' concept for smartphones which will allow customers to choose between a 2GB, 3GB, 4GB or 6GB RAM, and mix & match it with 32GB, 64GB & 128GB ROM in a combination of your choice. Further you can choose between a dual (13+2MP) or a triple rear camera (13+5+2MP), an 8MP or a 16MP selfie camera. You can also select a color of your choice, your own version of Lava's Z series – and your MyZ is ready. You can order this 'Made-to-Order' device on Lava e-store- www.lavamobiles.com and your unique smartphone, made just for you, will be delivered to you.

How Storage Partners are Betting Big on SSD Business in India

The storage partners in India see huge growth potentials in the SSD business as the demand for reliable storage has increased due to the new normal of distance learning and remote working. Partners say that SSDs are increasingly becoming popular in both consumer and enterprise segments due to its host of benefits and advantages over the conventional storage solutions.

Solid State Drives are the next big wave in the storage industry because of its performance, speed and reliability. While HDDs are cheaper and can offer more storage space, SSDs are faster, lighter, durable, and use less energy. SSDs have already witnessed large scale adoption in the enterprise and SMB sectors due to low TCO. Though HDDs dominate the consumer segment, SSDs are slowly creating its mark in this space as well.

According to CMR's India Hard Drive Market Review for H1 CY2020, the India Consumer Internal SSD market (SATA & PCIe) shipments recorded 6% YoY growth in H1 2020. The WFH, LFH and online content consumption were the key drivers for this growth. The 6Wresearch suggest that Indian Solid State Drive Market will record \$128 million by 2022.

"The storage demand of users has increased exponentially due to low-cost broadband and PC and smartphones penetration. The WFH and LFH have further fuelled the demand for internal storage. Though the demand for SSDs is rising steadily, many consumers still prefer HDDs due to low cost and more storage space. Whereas

SSDs are more preferred in the enterprise space due to its low TCO. We fulfil the demand according to consumers' preference", said Mohinder Singh Mutneja, Proprietor of Genuine Computer. SSDs are built on NAND flash memory, which deliver superior performance, efficiency and durability and hence make it expensive than HDDs. However, a little extra expense on SSD storage can save future upgrade expenditure. "Due to the introduction of WFH and LFH and usage of greater internet usage demand for SSDs are drastically increased. SSD's are much faster, quieter, not susceptible to shock, low power consuming and reliability while comparing to SATA HDDs. Consumers should see these advantages as well while making a choice for storage solution for their needs", said Jess Joseph, AGM, Star One IT.

Partners say that with increasing consumption, the price gap between HDDs and SSDs will narrow down soon. Shijo. K. Thomas – CEO of M/s Oxygen – The Digital Shop said, "Demand for storage solutions have only increased in the last one year. Laptops and desktops have become more relevant due to the social distancing norms. Consumers now want high storage capacities along with speed and hence, inclination towards SSDs is rising. At present, a high storage capacity (1TB) SSDs are expensive. However, this price is likely to come down due to increased demand and higher production."

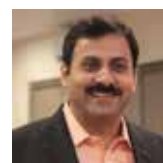
RP tech India is the # No 1 SSD distributor in the country with a market share of around 30-40

per cent. The Company has been instrumental in growing penetration of SSDs in the market.

RP tech India recently launched the 'SSD Upgrade Offer' for end customers aimed at creating a buzz around its latest SSDs portfolio. The company offers value added support along with product availability that makes it easy for partners to push SSD storage solutions.

Appreciating the support from team RP tech, Anand Dalvi, proprietor of Kumar Systems said, "RP tech inventory supply was excellent during the lockdown and also they supported partner to create a market of storage as value addition." Endorsing similar views, Mr. Joseph said, "Support from RP Tech India is highly recommendable. The key differentiator is the number of branches and availability of products experts in each branch."

RP tech India is bullish over the business and encourages partners to tap the potentials in the SSD segment. Highlighting the prospects of SSD business in India, **Rajesh Goenka, Director, Sales & Marketing, RP tech India** said, "As the demand grows, the SSD prices are falling rapidly making it more affordable. Today SSD penetra-



tion is almost 50 per cent and the business segment has huge potentials to grow in the next 3-5 years. It is a time partners take this business opportunity and educate their customers about upgrading SSDs for higher storage capacity and speed."



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