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Guest speaker, fireside chat: Building Hyperconnected Ecosystems

What's Next for the Enterprise

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

'Fireside Chat' led by Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst,

ZK Research

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Featured Speakers:

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications
Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

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As introduced Zeus Kerravala from ZK Research. Just a quick intro on myself. I'm a longtime industry analyst. Spent about a dozen years at Yankee Group. I've been running my own research firm since then. And I focus primarily on a lot of the emerging technologies in the areas of networking, security, and communication. So today, it's a lot of 5G, Private 5G, artificial intelligence, edge computing. And I think this is going to be an interesting topic. So Ramesh, why don't you just do a little quick intro on yourself?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Good morning to you all. It's the second day. So fantastic. Yesterday was really good. A lot of meetings.. It's been a couple of years before everything shut down and reopened. So it's nice to see everybody in the room here. So this is our match Morimoto, I'm the head of Americas for Tata communications. So we have a lot of business in the Americas. We're a global company. And before joining TATA, I used to work for Nokia, Verizon and Gartner. And now it's been 35 years in the telecom industry today. And I'm here to share some of the success stories that we have from telecom.



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Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

So you got a Gartner backgrounds, you're well versed in quadrants.

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Yeah, (inaudible)

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

All right. So we're going to talk hyperconnected enterprise hybrid connected businesses, why don't we just start with defining what that is, and what's driving the need for it?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Absolutely. So if you look at the enterprise transformation that has been happening over the last 20/30 years, a lot of times, transformation is done in silos, like you transform your network, then you transform your customer experience journey, transform your cloud, transform your applications, a lot of these transmission transformations really happen in silos. So as an enterprise customer, you don't get the complete benefit of those transformations, because it happens in silos. So what we are coming up with is a hyper connected ecosystem that transforms the whole infrastructure, in a holistic manner, whether you talk to transform your workforce kind of activity, or a supplier management system, or a customer experience management system and platforms associated with that. So you do it a holistic way, so that you bring the best bring all of the benefits of that digital transformation to that particular enterprise. So that's really the gist of the hyper connected ecosystem.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

I think one of the things that's been lost in all this digital transformation is that it is a network centric transformation. In fact, if you think of all the building blocks of digital transformation, cloud IoT mobility, they're all network enabled technologies. In fact, I've done a lot of work with a number of companies that went through their own digital transformation processes. They didn't modernize the network. And those projects, in some ways failed, right? And they didn't get the ROI from. So it's an interesting shift that's going on here. Because historically, when you think of the role of the network people thought of it, you know, got the call that the plumbing, right, and nobody really thought of it this strategic, but it is today. So can you give me an example of hyperconnected? Organization?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Yeah, absolutely. So if you look at the benefits of a hyper connected ecosystem, it allows the enterprises to grow on all facets is basically borderless, all friends here, this single distributor worldwide, doing business in several countries, several continents, how do you grow all of that at the same time as kind of (inaudible) cloud. The other benefit of hyper connected ecosystem is performance. Performance has been the number one factor driving all of these digital transformations. And obviously, customer experience side of the house - customers demand better services with the low latency and highly secure services. So hyper connected ecosystem drives those few areas, those are and there'll be some reliability, low latency, reliability. And then finally, risk management. So given all of the stuff that is happening around us



geopolitical scenario, how do you protect your supply chain? How do you protect your network from you know, being not available for your business, so that managing risk, managing performance, or liability, and all of that brings all of that into borderless growth, is really what hyper connected ecosystem does today for enterprise customers, if I may give you an example, a global ride sharing company as an example. They use our customer engagement customer experience platform to communicate with, with different consumers and the drivers, right, and still anonymize all of the voice calling and all of the text messages that are that are exchanged in that business process. It makes your consumers safe to communicate with someone like that. And he knows it's protected. You knows it's anonymized. So that sort of platform and services as part of our hyper connected ecosystem helps our enterprise customers to run their business in much better way. And it further allows their end customers end users to feel safe and easy to do business with a particular enterprise. In this case, a ride sharing company.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

I think the aspect of that is the anonymous ride sharing company that's global, which, let's face it, there's only one of those right. But you know, is they were able to disrupt traditional industry that I thought really wasn't destructible that being taxis in and actually gained some interesting share to that. I will give my own example. Who here has been to the chase Center, to see a warrior's game? Can you people, okay, so, in fact, if you look up on my YouTube channel, I did a video with the CIO there, Daniel Brusilovsky. And he talked about their vision of creating hyper connected fans. And so, if you download the Warriors app, when you're in stadium, watching the game, you're going to get pushed a ton of messages during the game, there's a trivia contest going on, you can scan the QR codes up on the board, you watch the game, you message other fans, and so it creates this really interesting mix of physical and digital technologies, right. But it creates an entirely new type of experience. You know, and obviously, with sports and entertainment, I know you guys are big into that. There's a lot of dollars up for grabs, right. So I think those are just kind of a couple of examples of hyper connectivity

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

There's retail experience where you walk into the store, pick up whatever you want off the shelf, you walk out, and in five seconds, you get the bill, the message comes to you. It's all done, facial the technician and play a lot of IoT, Private 5G, private connectivity and play security services in play. A lot of this has to come together, voice data security, cloud enablement, all of that comes together in the hyper connected ecosystem. So that business, that consumer experiences is kept up data.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

So you named a lot of technologies there. And in a lot of ways, you know, when you live in a world where everything's connected, there creates a lot of interdependencies. So if you're trying to create a really great fan experience, employee experience, customer experience, you're only as good as your weakest link, right? And so, from your experience, what are companies doing well, and where is there room for improvement?



Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Yeah, absolutely. This is, like I mentioned at the front end, right? Digital transformation is happening. But how do you bring all of that in that holistic manner? How do you develop that connectivity to all of the entire ecosystem? And bring whether it is IP connectivity or voice enablement, cloud connectivity, or a customer experience platform? engagement as an example? These areas are the ones that are part of this hyper connectivity ecosystem?. Yeah, so those are the primary focus areas for us, obviously, depending on the vertical customers that you're working with, like I mentioned, the ride sharing company is a set of platforms and vertical and horizontal integrations that we bring into play. If it is a retail chain, there's different set of systems that we have to integrate. So the primary focus is vertical and horizontal integration across your enterprise ecosystem, and bring conductivity and cloud and security and all of that on that makes that allows enterprises to do better. That's primary focus areas.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

So how do you do that, though, because as you mentioned, we deploy things in silos, right? The person I buy my Wan services from isn't the same company I buy my Wi Fi from which isn't the same as my CRM system, or they all have a dependency. So how do you bring those things together?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

So when you when we deal with our customers, especially talking about let's say, no network transformation. So if you talk to a network, it's personality, who drives the network transformation is probably not thinking about the customer engagement piece of that is sitting right next door. So it is as Tata communications, we bring those pieces together. So when we talk about network transformation, we talk about Okay, how about your business? Your customer experience? How are we adding value to the customer experience? So we bring a few things together. So that's an important piece of this hyper connected ecosystems.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

Okay, and then from from a customer engagement perspective, are you finding because everybody uses the term business outcomes, right, in which it's overused in a lot of cases. But if you really are talking about business outcomes, then when you deal with your customers, you're not, I mean, you're still dealing with the engineers to some degree, right. But these decisions, are they, have they been made? What kind of outcomes are people looking for? And then who's driving those initiatives?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Yeah, so business outcomes are like you said, that's really overused, but if you look at

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

Well, depends on what it is. Right? The definition varies.



Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

So if I can give you an example of a food delivery company that has achieved 40% cost optimization, and they are customer experience by actor, I share the story of NPS score as an example. So the customer experience portion went up really high. It's a real world example, that Tata comm delivered to a food delivery company. So business outcome is pretty simple customer experience. Number one, cost optimization, employee experience within the enterprise. These are clearly defined business outcomes, and we bring it to the customer.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

All right, now. You know, we talked about some of the enabling technologies, right being I think some of the ones (inaudible) AI IoT Cloud edge, right, 5G, there's a whole bunch of components that have to work together here. And so what are some of the challenges you see here in, when you look at the laundry list of these things? How do companies actually gain ROI from these? And because there's a lot of, you know, there's a lot of interdependencies. And actually, a lot of these things actually make the environment more complex and more complicated as well. Right?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

See, I can tell you one of the challenges getting that, remember, I talked about the holistic transformation story. Folks still tend to do transformation in silos. So try to get everybody together to look at various aspects of this transformation. So that is still a challenge in the ecosystem. So, it takes a little while for folks out there to actually look at this in a holistic manner. So we as TATA Comm, We bring that message to our customers, we give a blueprint, hey, here's how we can go about it. Here's how we do multiple facets at the same time without trying to boil the ocean in a way, right? To the incremental benefits, bring it, show the business outcome, and eventually get it done across all of your different facets in a holistic manner. So the challenge is pushing everybody pulling everybody together into a one common goal one transformation, holistic transformation drive is somewhere that we're facing.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

Well, that's a big task. trying to get everybody on the same page there? And then how are you helping customers sort of mask I might say, masking the complexity, but the risks the deployments, because every time I introduced one of these new technologies, you know, there's obviously a huge skills gap issue, the security issues, right? You know, when you think of the old data center model, everything was centralized, it was pretty easy to manage, got more complicated and moved to the cloud got even more complicated now they're moving to the edge. And so how are you allowing customers to deploy these things, but still keeping it somewhat manageable?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

So like I said, Look at the incremental benefits, let's say, the low hanging fruits first, right, you have a blueprint that allows that business outcome or a tangible business outcome in a shorter period of time. So you have to accomplish those. And you take that to the next level, as the transformation program takes shape. So there has to be a business outcome, there has to be a tangible outcome, whether it is a



customer experience side of the house, where a growth business grows, or a cost optimization, there are several pieces that we can put into it. But you hit the nail on the head, if I don't see the business outcome, if I don't see the value, it's hard to drive these things together, the ROI becomes a big issue. So we make sure when we start that transformation drive, there are benefits out there that are visible, tangible, in a relatively short period of time.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

And so how do you recommend? So, I've, I've described that as focusing on chip shots, not moonshots. And what I mean by that is, you know, if you're trying to do a little 10 yard chip shot, that's relatively easy compared to like a moonshot project. So if you're talking to a retailer, and you said, you need to be Amazon, a year from now, that would be so overwhelmingly difficult, you'd paralyze them. But if you just put in some self-checkout, which isn't the greatest thing in the world, but something like that, that's something that's manageable, right? Or, you know, so how do you help customers? So first of all, what are some of those short term initiatives? And I understand they vary by vertical, but how do you help customers think through that to understand where those quick wins can come?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Yeah, so on a retail store, if I can zoom in there? How do you engage with your customers? Customer interaction? How do you run a campaign? Let's say if I'm having a sale? How do you take that message to your customers? How do you reach out to your customer who is available on let's say 15 different channels, right WhatsApp and messaging and email and Instagram, so of the wall rate, how do you know this particular customer can be reached at this time of the day? And this particular product that this customer will prefer to buy from you? How do you put all that together, put that AI and ML into the game, make sure that particular customer interaction is done in the most optimized way. And that actually produces results for the retailer as an example. So in order to bring all of that together, that is where hyperconnected ecosystem plays, and you start producing those low hanging results to that particular enterprise retailer, in this case.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

I think if you can get some quick wins with that, then you can almost use the ROI from that to go fund other projects. Is that right?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

absolutely. That's exactly how it plays out. We can show business outcome in a relatively short period of time.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

So, let's talk about target. Right, so you obviously must pre-roll organization as a hyperconnected one. So, what kind of investments has taught me to help you service your customers?



Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Yeah, so absolutely. So as TATA Comm as you can understand all of our products and services today has been digitally transformed. They're all available as a platform as a service. So instead of operating 16 different products and all different silos, having their own OSS BSS system supporting this product, we are transforming the entire product as a platform as an experience. That's one number one focus for us. And how do you take this now? platform as a service, when you implement a particular solution for a customer, how do you allow that East West integration of the ecosystem that customer might have? Let's say you're running a fan engagement program. How do you connect to all of the CRM databases, right? All how all of the business system that is already in the enterprise, you have to be able to connect with them, have an open API's to be able to bring these things together. So that implementing that particular platform is much easier for our consumer. So basically, easy to do business with. So that way, so that's the main area focus for us.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

So how long did it take to bring all those? So you now have one platform? It's not one? It's several platforms that are horizontally integrated.

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

It depends on the use cases, what you're trying to do, if you're talking about a fan engagement, or ride sharing, or a food delivery system. So every enterprise business is unique in a certain way. So, you will have to have a platform that you can expand in all directions. And all API's are built into talking to multiple other business ecosystems. So that when you implement this, this is an easier way to implement. It's not like a five-year project.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

And of all the technologies that we discussed today, what are some of the ones that you're looking to invest in, in the future.

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

So the investment really goes into platforms. So scalable, flexible, API driven integration across multiple business ecosystem, that is a primary focus for us, because the platform is horizontal, but when we take the platform to vertical industries, whether it is retail, or manufacturing, you need that additional business intelligence built into this so that you can easily interact with those vertical systems or vertical industries. So that's the primary focus of investment (inaudible).

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

Okay. And, and specifically around, I'm fascinated by the use of AI and companies today, because it's something I think that you know, a couple of years ago, brought up pre pandemic, you know, I got a lot of people rolling their eyes, they weren't really all that excited about it. But I think there's so much data coming into companies today that you almost can't survive without it. Right. So what, how are you guys using that to improve your interaction?



Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

This is a very good question. So when we provide the current activity, let's say if you have 20,000 employees, or a million customers, or maybe 20,000, branch offices around the world, all of these edge endpoints are creating significant amount of data in the network or in the cloud. So we have AI driven platforms to make sense of this data. And how do we make sense? And how do we add that data to the business that enterprise is running on. So we have platforms in place today, that collects all of this data, whether it is a device, a 4G, 5G device, or a router sitting in a branch office creates all of this data, whether it is security related or business related performance or later, latency later, you name it, all of this data is aggregated. And then we bring that data, we make sense of it and bring that to the enterprise so that they can add that value to their business.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

It's an interesting challenge for companies too, because in the data sciences is an expression. Good data leads to good insights. But you started off talking about the different silos, right? Right. And so data silos lead to fragmented insights. Right? And so it's this fragmentation of insights, I think, ultimately might hold companies back, which shows the benefit of bringing things together in the right platform. So, you know, looking ahead over the next three, four years, what are some of the emerging technologies that are coming that you think are going to help drive this to be more hyper connected?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Yeah, absolutely. So, if you look at the way the industry is moving in multiple different directions, 5G as an example. So we are investing big on 5G Edge conductivity. So we are talking about a global sim, right, allow edge devices and customers to roam over hundreds plus hundreds of countries without having to worry about which operator they come back to. We are investing in multi cloud applications. How do you take your ERP applications to a different set of cloud and how do you maintain performance? And we'll (inaudible) from those platforms. So, these are the areas that we focus on as the next three or four years. Security. Cybersecurity is one of the key areas for us. Whether it is edge security, IoT, device security, or platform or network security, all of that plays a major role. So in the last next three to four or five years, these are the primary areas that we'll be looking into

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

when we can get a whole discussion around cyber. I know Mark's got a mic there, and we get time. We have any questions in the audience?

Antony Savvas, IT Europa

Yeah, Anthony Savvas, UK IoT Now, Vanilla Plus, and others. Yeah, we've heard the future as the edge and it is. The edge is controlled by telcos predominantly through base stations through masts, you need those to get access to the customers at the edge, which the hyperscale has realized because they're making alliances with the telcos. So why are the telcos selling off their masks in their base stations, where this is



where the edge is going to be largely hosted through many data centers? For example, I'm just wondering why the telcos around the world are selling off the edge when it's the future. Are they just stupid?

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

So they are a lot about wireless edge and a lot into that. The business ecosystem has changed over the years, if you look at the last 20 years or so, all of these service providers, they used to have their own cell sites, the entire the (inaudible) and operator on everything, but that model has changed over the years. I know a particular service provider, sold everything, all of those, it's towers and cables and all that stuff. And that leads right there. So that's a business decision. I don't think that has anything to do with the customer experience out of the house, or the way you consume those services today. It's just a business decision, that's the way I see it.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

I think in a lot of ways by selling it off let's the people that own it, focus on innovating more because I do think where telcos got themselves in trouble is when they own everything. They couldn't really drive investments into all areas at once, a few you lease back then the company that does own the campaign.

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

it's more of a business decision, but the innovation is still happening.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

We have time probably for one more.

Steve Cassidy, PC Pro

Hi, Steve Cassidy PC Pro magazine. I'm conscious that in talking about the hyperconvergence in particular, while it is an innovation, it is selling into a market of mature IT services and relationships. The previous generation buzzword was outsourcing and intellectual capital moving outside the enterprise. When you try to converge to a heavily outsourced organization, do you want to keep owning the project? Do you want to be working with the outsources or replacing them? Where's your kind of attack direction? If you want to call it that.

Ramesh Marimuthu – VP & Head of Americas, Tata Communications

Yes. Look, the way that industry is evolving. Like I said, at the front desk, you know, folks who used to buy products 16 different products, they get 16 different bills, 16 different contracts, you name it, right? That's how it used to be. Now we are uniquely bringing everybody, everything together as a service. So you consume it as a service. So you don't have the difficulties and in implementing 16 different products in 17 different ways. So we bring that fully end-to-end managed service proposition to our customers. I think a lot of customers like that idea, hey, I don't want to deal with all of those 17 Different platforms and things that I have to worry about integrating you bring me the holistic platform as a service, or particular service that I'm willing to pay for. It's almost like a single throat to choke, where we take responsibility to put



everything together for a customer. I think that's where the industry is going. And that's where the managed services have become a major driver in the ecosystem today.

Zeus Kerravala, Founder and Principal Analyst, ZK Research

In fact, as an analyst, I've seen a significant uptake over the last few years in managed services. I think it's a good way to de-risk a lot of times. All right, well, I think we're out of time right now. All right, very good. Thank you. Thanks, everybody.

