

Date :- August 2010	Edition :- National
Page :- 35 (35,36,37)	Headline :- Buck to the trend create a niche

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TIKONA SME BIZ

BUCK TO THE TREND CREATE A NICHE

Wireless in enterprise is still a niche market. It is considered to be unsecure and unreliable vis-à-vis its sibling wired connection. But the flexibility and mobility are some of the advantages have wooed many enterprises to adopt it.

BY SANJAY MOHAPATRA

FACTS ABOUT



Year of Operation	2008-09
Key People	Prakash Bajpai, Founder, MD & CEO, Harish Baranik, Chief Marketing Officer, Tarun Kumar, CTO, Ravish Khurmi, Financial Controller
Number of Employees	More than 5300
Direct presence in India	33 cities
Services	Secured Wireless Broadband for Homes & Offices
Website	www.tikona.in

In the enterprise market, networking means wired. It is primarily for the reason of security and reliability. Another point is the enterprises use desktop as primary solutions for computing and wired connection goes well with those devices. For wireless, there has to be an extra wireless access card with in PC, which normally does not come as default. Today's market trend shows that notebook adoption is increasing in the enterprise space and wireless stands a better chance in the situation. As far as the security and reliability concerns are there, the wireless equipment vendors are taking extra care in making these devices extremely secure and reliable. This is precisely why wireless connectivity is moving ahead in the enterprises.

Besides the products, it takes a lot of things to take any product to the heart for the customers. First and foremost is creating a change in the attitude of the customers by offering quality and reliability, secondly, offering right pricing and support. So at every stage there is a requirement of innovation. If the market is already there, to add another product is not a big deal but if there is no

market and create a market for any product is a great challenge. Time and again it is seen that by going against the trend with better solutions can create a trend in itself. When In 1530, Copernicus said Earth rotates around the Sun, it was not accepted by the people but he created a trend at that point of time. Similarly, Tikona Digital Networks, the young but dynamic company under the leadership of Prakash Bajpai, is going to create a trend in the market for wireless networking.

The technology the company uses for wireless broadband is 4G OFDM, MIMO and other technologies such as smart antenna and beam steering that are superior to the 2G & 3G technologies when it comes to fixed home broadband applications. DSL is the wireline alternative that can do the same job but is prohibitively expensive and very slow to deploy, no wonder very little new investments are being done using DSL. Tikona's network is capable of providing a fixed wireline broadband experience on a wireless platform with improved security standards. The company offers WPA 2 security encryption and antivirus bundled with the solution.

Founded in 2008, Tikona Digital Networks, an 'All India' Internet Service Provider (Class A ISP) is engaged in building the next generation wireless broadband services for home and enterprise customers. The first commercial service of its brand Tikona Wi-Bro commenced in Mumbai in March 2009. Tikona Wi-Bro service is available in 30 cities including the top ten cities of India viz. Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkata, Indore, Ahmedabad and Surat and plans to reach out to 150 cities in the next one year. The company has been backed by investors like Goldman Sachs, Indivision India partners and Oak India Investments with a capital investment of Rs.500 crore.

The services of the company started with using free spectrum of 5.8GHz and 2.4GHz to cater to the to the consumers but as far as enterprises were concerned it had to go with a licensed spectrum and this year the company participated in BWA auction process and bagged 20MHz for 5 circles India including Uttar Pradesh (East), Uttar Pradesh (West), Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.

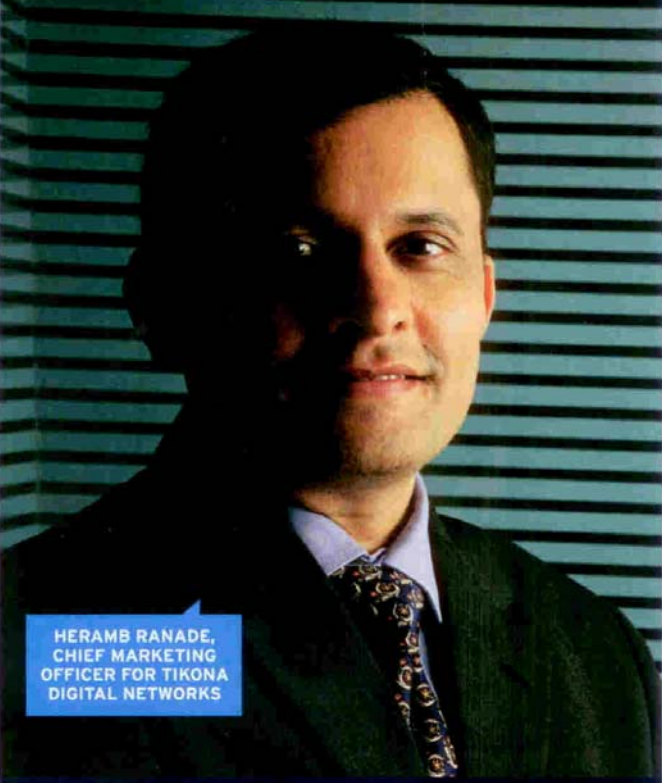
Heramb Ranade, Chief Marketing Officer for Tikona Digital Networks, says, "Tikona Digital Networks has become the fastest growing broadband player in its first year of commercial launch. With the win of BWA auctions in 5 circles, the company has secured an access to 30% of India's urban population."

With the license in hand, Tikona Digital has rolled out services for the enterprises with an initiative called Direct to Office (DTO). The advantage of Tikona Digital Networks is that it is the only service provider that caters specially to the wireless broadband needs of homes and office segments. Heramb adds, "Our competitors primarily focus on voice and not broadband as their rider business. Tikona Digital Networks has captured the space of 'Secured Wireless Broadband' using 4G OFDM & MIMO technologies. This innovative technology and network architecture has given us a first mover advantage in the country. We have deployed the highest level of security measures such as WPA2 advanced encryption, 802.1X authentication, MAC level binding and a unique combination of user id and password giving complete freedom from risks of self installed Wi-Fi devices. Additionally, we are the only company that offers a default anti-virus solution for PC security."

The company already has a subscriber base nearing 2 lacs and plans to target 5 lacs during this year and the service network will be expanded to 50 cities across India, which will be extended to another 100 towns in next one year.

Tikona Digital Networks caters to home

FINAL QUESTION



**HERAMB RANADE,
CHIEF MARKETING
OFFICER FOR TIKONA
DIGITAL NETWORKS**

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT DTO AND THE POTENTIAL YOU SEE IN THIS MARKET?

In today's competitive market, Enterprises need internet to keep their businesses running 24x7, business transactions suffer if internet connectivity is down even for a short time. Tikona Enterprise Solutions recognizes this importance of internet and its applications in businesses today and hence provides solutions to suit the needs of enterprise customers.

Our Direct to Office (DTO) internet offers leading edge 'Internet Leased Line plus' service that provides a host of intelligent features such as Load Balancing, Assign Speed by user group, Secured Office Wi-Fi, Secured Outdoor Campus Wi-Fi and Dedicated Bandwidth with SLAs.

HOW THE SERVICE IS PRICED VIS-À-VIS COMPETITION?

The pricing strategy of Tikona Digital Networks is at par with the national Telco Broadband players. The one time entry cost for home customers is as low as Rs 500 and monthly plans start at Rs. 300 and go up to Rs. 3500 depending on usage requirements. For the SMB broadband segment, plans start from a monthly rental of Rs. 850/- with a one time installation charge of Rs. 800. Enterprise solutions are customized as per business needs and priced competitively.

NAME A FEW OF YOUR MAJOR CUSTOMERS?

Our home customer base is nearing 2 lacs which is spread across the top 30 cities of India. Our recently launched enterprise business caters to customers from varied industry segments such as education, hospitality, ITES, realty, BFSI, media & entertainment, transport & logistics, FMCG and automobile.

and enterprise segments under its brand name Tikona Wi-Bro & Tikona Enterprise Solutions respectively. In the home category, subscribers are offered 2 Mbps speed on all plans, a unique bill control feature and all home solution to connect multiple PCs wirelessly. In the enterprise category, we have recently launched 'Direct To Office' (DIO) Internet that offers premium and managed Internet Leased Line plus services with path breaking features that are customizable for the enterprise, something that is being introduced for the first time in India, possibly worldwide.

The company has a very strong back end system designed specially to cater to data services. This robust back-end system has been deployed by company's experienced and talented in-house team with the help of our integration and technology partners. This system comprises functionally rich customer centric applications like CRM (with multiple touch points) for efficient customer service, promotions, product definition catalogs, acquisitions and customer retentions. The Web based customer self service for customer registration, query management, bill presentment and payments is also there. The company has also deployed proven OSS solutions (service fulfill-

ment) that enable reduced time to market for launching new services and facilitating seamless service fulfillment. A comprehensive Telecom specific Business Analytics solution has also been deployed enabling tapping revenue generating opportunities and reduce revenue leakage. All these infrastructural deployment ensure quality of service is ensured to the customers.

It being a young company, Tikona Digital Networks follows a push strategy wherein customers are contacted by its sales executives. To support them Below the Line activations and to create brand awareness, Above the Line campaigns are undertaken across India consisting of a strategic media mix of print, outdoor and radio.

The company provides 'Live Demo' in India. This tool enables customers to experience Tikona services at their doorstep. Heramb adds, "We have a well trained and technically sound sales team in place that personally caters to individual needs of our customers, requirement based solutions. We also have qualified & skilled engineers who are ready to address any customer concerns at their home/offices."

As far as the ground level go to market is concerned, the company do engage channel partners

in its strategy. They are the best in the telecom business belonging to the data/voice segment, System integrators or OA partner fraternity. Tikona Digital Networks empowers them with innovative products, sound and competitive margins, excellent product training and strong field support. With a huge market potential waiting to be tapped, it makes a win-win strategy for both the company and the channel partner to join hands and be present in the market with lucrative offers for the customers.

Finally...

It's just been a year in operation and Tikona has already made substantial progress in its revenue. The company is rapidly acquiring customers and is today the fastest growing private broadband company in the country, which means its monthly addition of subscribers is highest among private operators. When Tikona is adding 20,000 net customers every month, the next highest private operator adds around 12,000 to 14,000 net customers in the same period and the industry ARPU for Broadband are in the Rs 500 range. So it can be well imagined what can be the turnover of the company after one year. **SME**