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comptel

In The Office
EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW 

Software with UNIQUE VALUE

An international technology forerunner, Comptel provides software and services to telecommunications companies across the globe.

Images courtesy of Comptel

Every single day, Comptel works with telecommunications service providers to manage more than 20 per cent of the world's mobile data. Established in 1986, the company has grown to become a key player in the software industry for telecommunications and is continuing to grow. *The CEO Magazine* spoke to CEO and President Juhani Hintikka about the changes he has made in the company, how Comptel ensures its customers are satisfied with the products and services it provides, and what the future holds for the industry.

The CEO Magazine: During your four years as president and CEO, what changes or initiatives have you implemented as part of your vision for the company?

Juhani: First of all, we started by having a dialogue around company values and defining what kind of company we wanted to build. That dialogue revealed four core values: Passion, unification, respect, taking action. These terms best describe what we want to be and how we want to be

perceived by our customers and by our own employees here within the organisation.

One major change we've gone through recently was a complete rebrand of the company. We just launched a new visual outlook for the Comptel brand and have done a lot of work around our strategy portfolio and consequently, the messaging. In repositioning the company's story, we have also developed a number of new solutions.

The leadership team has also seen some changes, with some new people joining us in 2011-12. And the company as a whole has grown as well, with an injection of about 50 per cent of our total personnel. We have opened up new offices and, in doing so, have got closer to customers.

What have been some of the biggest challenges you have had to tackle and overcome?

When I joined in 2011, [Comptel] had a reputation of delivering quality products and a steady customer base. But we needed to build industry appetite for our

products and services, and hunger within the company to win new business and grow the company even further. But this is not something that you can do overnight.

Other challenges are related to the time it takes to complete sales cycles. From developing new solutions and then explaining them to customers, to the time we finally close the deal, can take a long time. At the same time, this is a very competitive industry, and it's only becoming more competitive, which adds to that challenge.

What makes Comptel unique in a competitive market?

A couple of things. First of all, we have built a very solid history. Comptel has been in this business delivering quality software to some of the most demanding companies in the world. That experience, and the reputation we've built through it, has been a platform for us to build on.

We are very focused on differentiation, and demonstrate that through our solutions. We are >

"Comptel has been in this business delivering quality software to some of the most demanding companies in the world."

- Juhani Hintikka



clearly not the biggest player, but we certainly see ourselves as the leading player in terms of innovation and differentiation, and the solution areas where we are cooperating. Our entire approach is driven by our customers' business needs, their revenues and what they need to grow. So rather than just pushing technology, we typically engage in a dialogue about exactly how we can help to grow their business, and deliver our solutions that way.

And then, of course, there is the people aspect. Comptel exemplifies competence and deep knowledge about our domain. We have put a lot of emphasis on nurturing a culture of learning, and we train our people to really build highly skilled expertise within the company.

How have your past experiences shaped your leadership style today?

Before joining Comptel, I spent four years in France—I've always held global roles throughout my entire career and I think that has given me valuable insight, including how to work with a diverse range the people, and visibility into different cultures and business environments.

In terms of my leadership style, I like to think of myself as somebody who is very open. I like to engage with people and am personally inspired by working closely with others. I delegate tasks and set very clear KPIs for performance, but at the same time, I don't manage through those too much. I think I am more of a person who uses KPIs as a platform, but can trust everybody to understand what needs to be done and how. I dislike corporate politics and am very low on hierarchy—I prefer to be much more coaching in my style.

How does Comptel look after its clients?

At Comptel, we have created a localised, customer-facing organisation. We have customers

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in 90 different countries around the world. We don't have offices in all of those locations, but we do have 15 offices around the world and, for the most part, converse with our customers directly. Even when we are selling and working through partners, we usually have our own people supporting the process.

We expect that our customers should have the ability to engage with us on a daily basis if needed. When things are moving quickly, especially around complex processes, it can be difficult to cover everything in a single meeting, but we always aim to work in a collaborative way with our customers and we like to think of that as one of our key strengths.

What you believe the future holds for Comptel?

Comptel's future will ultimately be about driving an understanding of

'generation cloud', as we call the end customers. How do we win the hearts and minds of these customers, who have developed seemingly impossible expectations about the digital and communications service experience? The customers of the future expect services to be delivered instantaneously. They expect to be online all the time, and with options to compare against. In a nutshell, I think customers' expectations are high, but as vendors and suppliers in this industry, it is our duty to meet them.

We also need to understand not only how to play in this new ecosystem, but how to master it. Who are the partners we will need? What architectures should we operate in? All of that of course requires a lot of interaction across various directions. In this regard, Comptel, as an independent software vendor, has typically been the man in the middle. ●

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We at Tech Mahindra have been rapidly expanding in Europe. While partnering them in their transformational journey, we are creating lasting digital experiences for our customers across the region.

As a strategic partner of Comptel in Europe, we wish Juhani Hintikka, President & CEO, Comptel the very best, as he inspires us to 'Rise' each day.

