

## 'India is a key market for voice SMS'

—Taranjit S Batra,  
vice president,  
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**Voice SMS is a craze in developing nations and non-English speaking countries. What are the prime reasons for the substantial growth in these markets?**

Mobile penetration and awareness about the usage of sophisticated phones in emerging markets are low as compared to developed countries. Traditionally, a large section of people in emerging markets reside in rural areas, and a majority of them prefer to use a simple tool to send an SMS. They prefer not to type to send an SMS. In this occasion, voice SMS can play a lead role in communicating their messages.

**You have launched the services in several countries. What are the present focus areas?**

Our thrust will be on markets in Af-



rica, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, South America and Asia.

**Though Kirusa is one of the leaders in the voice SMS business, the success of voice SMS will depend on the marketing strategies of cellular operators. How do they position the services?**

While sending an SMS through voice, a customer can send a message reflecting the person's emotions. In the case of a text messages, this (emotions) is not possible. On top of this, the price is reasonable as compared to text messages, though voice SMS is a special

value added service for telecom service providers. Our partners—service providers—have started adding customers with voice SMS services across the world. Recently, mobile operators in Bangladesh and Pakistan ran free voice SMS campaigns during festival seasons. In Bangladesh, the operators offered 20 calls a day during the Id festival.

**You have been operating in India as well. How has been the response from Indian cellular operators and customers?**

India is a key market for us. In India, mobile operators like Bharti, BPL (Mumbai circle), Aircell (Chennai circle), Idea, MTNL, Reliance (CDMA services), have already launched voice SMS services. Companies like Hutch, Reliance (GSM services) may follow suit soon. Indian customers, especially in rural belts, started experiencing the services and the volume would enhance over a period of time. In India, operators have priced the services reasonably at 75 paise to Re 1, while their text SMS is priced at round 55 paise. The state-run MTNL was the first telecom company in the world to launch voice SMS on fixed line.

**Indian operators and customers are too sensitive to new services and prices. What is your business model?**

We operate through revenue sharing model and complete sales model. Since revenue sharing model is there, it will not affect the operators' bottomline in the initial phase of the launch even in the case of a slow take off.

**What are the main applications that can run on the voice message platforms?**

Kirusa offers a platform. The platform used by Kirusa has the ability to manage and synchronize data and voice interactions, while its integration with IMS and 30 other standards enable operators to cost effectively deploy additional revenue generating services. It seamlessly combines graphics; text and audio output with speech, text and touch input to deliver quality services. Through multi-modality, people can speak, type or use a PDA stylus on a touch screen (input stage) or hear, read text or look at graphics when receiving information (output stage). This gives users the freedom to choose how they want to interact with a service at each step in the process. In this way, services are more convenient and easier to use—something people need in their fast paced, everyday life.

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