

## Emerging enterprises aiming to grow can rely on solutions like 'IT-as-a-Service'

Small is Big today. Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs) have big ambitions. Arguably, in every case, one thing that would differentiate a successful SMB from the rest is its ability to use technology as a competitive edge.

For the SMBs, keeping up with the rapidly changing technology and productivity systems in their business is not a choice; it is a necessity. They must constantly look for new channels to market, while improving quality of their products or services. For these reasons, the SMBs are in a dire need to adopt the rapidly evolving technologies that could redefine their business. Eventually, how well do they succeed? At the same time, we have service providers pitching cutting-edge Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions for better operations and productivity. The question remains, 'How can SMBs adopt these?'

## About the Author

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Venguswamy Ramaswamy, or “Swamy” as he is better known, globally heads the TCS Small and Medium Business (SMB)-iON. iON is a strategic business unit of TCS and provides end to end business solutions to the SMB segment.

In his previous role, he was the Director of TCS' Global Consulting Practice (GCP) and was instrumental in the structural formation, development and positioning of TCS' consulting offerings. Consulting Magazine has named him amongst the top 25 consultants of the year 2007.

During his 16 year tenure at TCS, Swamy has held several strategic positions including managing key customer relationships, building and heading the Process Consulting group, managing the Corporate Resource Management function, leading numerous Centers of Excellence, as well as launching TCS' first steps in geographies such as Hungary and China.

Swamy is a firm believer in the power of IT to create business value and is known for his interest in Innovation & Quality and expertise in Six Sigma. He is also recognized as a champion of many digitization drives within TCS, including deploying digital platforms for Six Sigma, creativity and talent acquisition.

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## The Dilemma

Today, the need of SMBs for ICT consumption is far from being met. ICT constitutes hardware, network, software and services working together. Typically, SMBs buy ICT from 7 to 12 vendors. The requirement starts with hardware, which is over time supported with network and connectivity services. Having a network set up, the SMB needs richer software, including collaboration tools and business applications. Yet, all this would not work if the SMBs are not advised and guided about how to adopt these. Therefore, the consulting service is important.

However, there are challenges. The foremost is the complexity of technology and quick obsolescence. Software gets complex which demands more sophisticated hardware to be compatible with it. Reliability of network is low unless one spends on sophisticated connectivity, which is seldom affordable. To make matters worse, the consultants are unable to have a proper grip about the true requirements or are confused. Not surprisingly, many SMBs turn ICT agnostic at the cost of losing market opportunity. Many recent technologies such as Web 2.0, green technologies, virtualisation, etc. have very little uptake in SMBs. Irrespective of the business benefit, lack of service providers, who understand the unique needs of SMBs, deter SMBs from embracing ICT.

## Compelling Need

Having said this, the business needs of SMBs are no less complex than large companies for specific reasons. Processes in SMBs are loose and evolve more rapidly. By nature, SMBs are more agile, with needs that are non-standard. Nevertheless, this uniqueness is important in their ability to think big and grow faster.

This calls for a new service model, where ICT can be rendered as a utility service, that is, made available on tap! Sounds challenging, but no less compelling.

Technology has come of age. AJAX has made rich and interactive content available on the browser. Desktop virtualisation has made remote control of system administration activities a reality. Open source and Web 2.0 allow richness in applications and enable rapid development of an application by a community. Wireless solutions make a big difference by allowing mobile workforce, which can respond with faster decision making. Unified communications technologies like Voice over IP (VoIP) are driving convergence between computers and telephones. All these can deliver the needed productivity for SMBs to compete with large players.

However, it is not about technology alone. It is about how it can be leveraged with the right business model. Till date, one would not find large service players leveraging this advancement to create a new business model. But there are a few companies which are breaking this norm. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has introduced a new service called, 'ITas-a-Service'. TCS IT as a Service is a business model that delivers on demand business capability with an integrated suite of hardware, network and software solutions along with business, technical and consulting services in a 'build-asyou-grow', and 'pay-as-you-use' paradigm through a combination of on-premises and shared services hosted platforms, which provide an edge to businesses.

Cutting Edge technologies will empower SMBs for growth. Yet, to be successful, SMBs should consume ICT not just for business process support, but to achieve the competitive advantage in an increasingly globalised market. Using technology for leadership in cost effectiveness, compliance, service quality and business growth is critical for SMBs. In today's uncertain economic environment, certainty from the ICT providers is equally important.

## Why iON

iON provides comprehensive solutions that address varied IT requirements. From network to ERP, iON is offered as a single service, in a pay-per-use model, allowing you to leverage the solution's true potential. iON ensures integration of all processes along with ease of use.

iON promises:

- High performance in normal broadband;
- Stringent security and data privacy ;
- Guaranteed availability (99 per cent uptime);
- Disaster recovery;
- Reduced need for IT staff.

iON, therefore, manages your processes while you use the software. You gain from:

### Integrated solutions

We ensure that all your solutions are connected. For example, if you are using a CRM along with an ERP, and have a document management system to organise your files, we ensure that these solutions are connected and work as one. So for you, it is simply IT and not applications.

### Increased agility

We bring in the agility to keep pace with changing processes or a new line of business. We help you configure the processes to work differently or simply choose new practices recommended by the software. Our activation system flags on best practices while the system is running. As you pick and choose, we give you more options to choose from.

### A pay-as-you-use model

This model eliminates capital investment as we provide the IT infrastructure and software on rent. You pay as you use and only for the number of users who actually use the software. The rent is charged monthly. Typically, the cumulative rental for three years is equal to the capital cost of acquiring similar or lesser software with one-time payment. Usually, the ROI exceeds rental within three months, when best practices are well followed. The rental includes maintenance and training, with no hidden costs.

### Personalised solutions

Although this is a cloud service, the software is configurable to each business. You will always get the flavour of your own business by picking and choosing what processes you would need.

### Automatic upgrades

We continuously invest in our solutions to ensure best practices. We enrich the software based on user feedback and business and statutory changes. We ensure the upgrade without disrupting the user.



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Hardware + Network + Software + Services

## About iON

iON is Tata Consultancy Services' strategic unit for Small and Medium Business. iON provides end - to - end business solutions to the SMB segment, the growth engine of the economy. iON caters to the needs of multiple industry segments with best practices gained through TCS' global experience, domestic market reach, skills, know-how and delivery capabilities.

For more information, visit us at [www.tcsion.com](http://www.tcsion.com)

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## About Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

Tata Consultancy Services is an IT services, consulting and business solutions organization that delivers real results to global business, ensuring a level of certainty no other firm can match. TCS offers a consulting-led, integrated portfolio of IT and IT-enabled infrastructure, engineering and assurance services. This is delivered through its unique Global Network Delivery Model™, recognized as the benchmark of excellence in software development. A part of the Tata Group, India's largest industrial conglomerate, TCS has a global footprint and is listed on the National Stock Exchange and Bombay Stock Exchange in India.

For more information, visit us at [www.tcs.com](http://www.tcs.com)

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