Now because of these issues, we could say that probably the B2C traditional model is a bit commoditized. Now, why is that happening? It's because there's certain structural challenges the CSPs are facing. For example, they're focused on short term performance structures and short term performance KPIs. They're still focusing on RPO, whereas they need to also look at customer lifetime values and long term KPI.

Secondly, they have siloed operating models. You know, there are different departments and units for different things, but that borderless end-to-end operating model is missing. And then there are those challenges around undifferentiated products and services. Having said that, you know, it's not that there is no opportunity, in fact, there is a big opportunity and the opportunity has been presented by the adversity, which is the pandemic. So in a strange way, what's happened is that during the pandemic, the telcos really rose up to the occasion. They were really able to perform a role of a model citizen in terms of being there both for their consumers as well as their business clients in terms of providing business critical connectivity services, as well as connectivity services which are very important for the consumers because everything was done remotely.

In fact, we did a research recently in Accenture, and interestingly, we found out that about 80% of the respondents said that they were very satisfied with their telco on broadband during the pandemic, and the story
is not very different when it comes to mobile. It was about 79% of respondents said the same. So what does it really mean?

The interesting thing is that this trust, which they have earned actually can be used as an off balance sheet item, as almost like an asset by the CSP to be able to then use the consumer data and get into new digital services.

I'll hand over to my colleague, Hillol, who talk a little bit about how they can do it. And then we listen from Sulabh about a very interesting opportunity the payments landscape offers in this space. So, Hillol, would you like to talk to our audience about that?

Hillol Roy: Sure, would love to. So we are in Barcelona at MWC. We have to talk about 5G. So 5G, the way we look at it, it's not just a network, it's an ecosystem, it's a new playground. So with 5G comes IoT. With 5G comes possibilities of AI e-mail, comes the partnership with cloud providers, which is not only about just network, but move onto their services. Then comes new possibilities around blockchain.

So when you bring all this, creates that immersive experience and that the high definition video or the interactivity of 5G, suddenly you have like a plethora of new services that is open to you that you can work on, create iteratively. As you know, in the new world of software defined networking, it's all about agile creation, constantly iterating, coming up new services, linking new services. And that said, Sulabhs, wanted to get your take payment being such a key part of mobile industry. How do you think 5G will impact it?

Sulabh Argawal: Payments is going through a massive disruption across the globe actually, both in financial services and in the mobile industry itself. I mean we've heard from so many of the CSPs. I just learned CSPs as the name for telcos today. So CSPs are actually having billion dollar valuations, right, STC pay. You look at Airtel Money, you look at Singtel getting into mobile wallets, you look at O2, Orange, everyone getting into mobile money.

I mean this is a clearly defined space where the telcos are seeing great valuation potential, as well as customer experience potential for their customer base.

And what we're seeing is what it's like if you go back a couple of decades, most experiences were like events, right? I give something, I go to an ATM and I withdraw money. That used to be a payments experience. I would go to a shop, I make the cash payment and that will be an event in itself, and that will be experience. But what's happening now more often, is that those experiences are being blended with various other experiences, right? So you go to a shop, you can buy money using buy now, pay later. You can you put other experiences with it, whether it is a fixed exchange being in a new country here, to convert from pound to euro at the same time, as well as bringing in other experience off of travel insurance and various other products and services that we can all experience as we go through that journey. And as these connected experiences are coming together, we can see the evolution of digital wallets going all the way to super apps. And this is where I think the industry is going to bring together new experiences to the customers and at the same time, creating value both for themselves and for the society.

From a security perspective, Hillol, I'll be very keen to get your perspective because I think you spoke about 5G and the foundation layers which are being put in place. In payments, we see this constant balance to be struck between security control versus convenience and experiences. Where do you see this going?

Hillol: Great point. So I think our Astha mentioned before, we had a security panel and not the only security panel today. So it's a big topic. I mean two reasons it's big, people see this humongous impact that 5G will have on their lives. Their coffees will almost be made by 5G.
At the same time, a lot of new things happening in 5G, so they are trying to understand what does it mean? So few things you earlier mentioned. So a few that are CSP deals, a few more times secured by design, zero trust network and integrated security view.

So essentially, what all this means is when we are building the 5G network or as we are looking at 5G, the security is something integrated into the basic structure, like protecting the user data or even the user identity as they are exchanging information or protecting any user when they’re traveling to another network. How do you make sure the user is the user and the network is the network, not someone else getting in the middle or things like how do you protect your data on cloud? So all those are integral part of 5G.

It is essentially we call a lot of the existing concepts we are still using, but otherwise, it’s a better revolutionary concept that we are trying to make sure that security is not an afterthought. It comes integrated with 5G.

**Astha:** Yeah, well said, Hillol. I mean it is definitely not an afterthought, and it’s something which needs to be thought right from the beginning, like you said, secure by design. Now I think it was it was wonderful to hear Sulabh talk about payments and Hillol talk about security and, you know, how it kind of fits well in this context of the CSPs. Now coming back to our original problem, which is the commoditization of the current CSP business model. Now how does all of this really impact that? So what happens is, so Sulabh talked about mobile wallets and digital wallets. That is one control point where you get into some of these new services as the CSP. But the interesting part is, if the wallet is successful, for example, you are continuously collecting and correlating customer data on new services that the customer is using or leveraging the wallet for. So it could be shopping on a marketplace, it could be home or on the smart home, it could be something related to music, something related to augmented gaming, etc. But as a result of all these new services, which you are transacting on in through the digital wallet, you collect more and more customer data.

You can use that customer data to then partner with the ecosystem and get into further newer digital services as a telco.

So it’s almost like a continuous circle, right? You use the force control point in this case, which is wallet, and then you expand it using data to get into other services. And as you get these other services, you get more data. So it never ends there. So that’s the thing which actually then can help the CSPs to address that point around commoditization. Because like we discussed, connectivity is commoditized and it’s these newer digital services which have the potential to bring in the additional monies.

**Sulabh:** I completely agree, Astha. I think with the payments ecosystem opening up, open banking, I'll throw an acronym at you guys, ISO2022 as well. So various payment mechanism, actually opening up data and you can actually carry richer data through the pipes. What it is allowing for is much richer set of information or data available and we are in this data overload space. The organizations that are going to use the data to actually craft new experiences are the ones that are going to succeed. I mean we will see the financial services organizations going after that. From one angle, you will have the e-commerce, the marketplaces coming at it from another angle, the telecom providers from another place, the travel, the entertainment, like all the industries who are trying to create new values, new experiences, will try to come at it. And I think the key is to actually start to think about the end-to-end customer experience and how you actually take a lead in creating those new experiences and bringing it to life to improve the life of the customers.

**Astha:** Yeah, absolutely. And I think I’m just going to end with one line that, and I think, Sulabh, you mentioned, so to solve the connected consumer, you need connected
industries and it is about telecom and payments and other such industries all coming together to have that one unified experience.

Hilol: Absolutely.