

PROTEI: Sometimes the future can't be predicted, but it can be invented



Vladimir Freynkman, VP, marketing and business development, PROTEI

PROTEI is one of Russia's leading telecom vendors with proven and innovative product portfolio, which consists of several product lines such as Roaming, Messaging, Customer Care, NGN, Data Charging and Management solutions (DPI and PCRF). PROTEI started active bringing their products and solutions to foreign markets since 2009. In this feature, Vladimir Freynkman, VP, marketing and business development at PROTEI shares his industry insights.

PROTEI actively started bringing their products and solutions to foreign markets in 2009. Vladimir Freynkman, VP of marketing and business development at PROTEI, sheds light on the company's latest activities.

In Russia, you have a huge internal telecom market. At the same time, there is very tough competition in the area you're working in. When and why did PROTEI decide to go abroad, and what countries are you working in?

We started our business with mobile operators in Russia and ex-USSR countries in 2002; the next five to six years were characterized by fantastic growth of Russian mobile operators and their subsidiaries in neighboring countries.

Such a situation gave us a very good possibility to enhance our product line and earn experience because the market capacity was enabling many vendors to find their niches.

We must take into account that Russian operators are highly demanding ones; they need solutions with high throughput that are both reliable and functionally-reaching at the same time. This is why the projects we did at that time helped us build a good platform for future expansion.

When our native market began to show saturation, we started seeking new opportunities and found that we were quite ready to work abroad. Our

product line and experienced team let us go ahead.

Today, PROTEI solutions have been installed in 22 countries; 12 of them are outside of ex-USSR boundaries. One of the regions where our business is growing is the Middle East.

After arriving in the Middle East, many important issues rose such as the way of thinking, language and so on. For this reason, in 2009, we established our regional branch in MENA named Silat Solutions. Since that time, we have implemented successful projects in Jordan, Bahrain, Palestine, Iraq, Yemen and Qatar.

Most PROTEI products were proven competitive in really tough markets. We have deployments of our roaming solutions like steering platforms, call completion solutions such as missed call alert and voicemail, RBT and some others. Now we can see high demand in data traffic management, and we are ready for this challenge.

PROTEI DPI and PCRF look good compared to our competitors, and we are preparing the pilot deployment in a Middle East network.

How do you perceive the attitude of foreign customers to Russian-made solutions?

The attitude of customers to Russian-made solutions is, on the whole, positive though they often express concerns based on local specifics, distance

from the supplier or the absence of a local office. For example, we can point out certain peculiarities in the MENA region. Our work starts with pilot projects in virtually every country and with every operator. These projects are implemented either on the verge of the cost of production or involve a substantial delay in payment. If the first project is successful, the operator eagerly invites us to take part in further tenders.

Customers are keen to collaborate with PROTEI further when they are assured that we supply high quality and reliable products that often exceed rival offers in regards to reliability, cost/performance and cost/quality ratios.

At the same time, we can see a difference in the attitude to different components of the solution in our native market in the MENA region. In Russia and most ex-USSR countries, system throughput, reliability and functionality are main factors by which the solution is evaluated; whereas, in the MENA region, operators are paying much more attention to statistics and reporting subsystems.

As per our understanding, customers are choosing us because of two main advantages. The first one is the possibility to meet operator needs and enable almost seamless integration into existing network environments. We

always do our best when the customer requires any kind of customization and functionality improvement. It's well-known that some vendors have unbelievable prices for such services.

At the same time, we offer our customers truly scalable solutions to be sure that they will not need to change platforms when their subscriber base increases. We are always trying to find an individual approach to every customer and to adapt the system to the customer's specific requirements.

A relationship built on respect and trust with the customer is formed thanks to the good work of our staff who are excellent specialists in their field, including our international support and deployment team consisting of Russian-based and Jordan-based subsidiaries.

How does PROTEI look for new customers abroad?

We employ three main methods for this. In the MENA region, our main approach is direct sales. This is possible due to the hard and pro-active work of our MENA team in Silat Solutions.

Second is through sales channels and partner sales. PROTEI have global partnership agreements with such vendors as ORGA systems, Peter-Service (billing solutions) and NSN (core solutions). Such partnerships

emerge in different ways, but PROTEI have found such partners that are important to our work in regional markets. Plus, you can't ignore the traditional ways of establishing new business contacts, of course, such as participation in conferences and shows.

PROTEI take part in at least two to three topical events annually. PROTEI experts answer dozens of questions about our solutions, providing full information about any details that interest visitors. The number of our booth at MWC-2014 in Barcelona is 6I22.

What are the dynamics of PROTEI's foreign business turnover over the last three years? What returns do you expect to get from this business in 2014, and what flagship products and solutions are you going to focus on?

We are witnessing a significant growth in the turnover associated with projects implemented beyond the borders of the former USSR.

As for the percentage of our turnover, about 25 percent of our sales is generated by exports to foreign countries located outside of ex-USSR boundaries. Two years ago, it was less than 15 percent. Regarding our expectations, let me focus on the technical side because the commercial side is clear and commonplace which is to enter new countries and increase turnover.

About PROTEI

The company was founded in 1997 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. It established the MENA regional branch Silat Solutions in 2009. PROTEI and its branch have more than 200 telecom, HW and SW development professionals.

More than 37 mobile and fixed-line operators in 22 countries use PROTEI equipment to serve over 100 million subscribers worldwide.

The technical aspect is much more interesting. We have announced several new products this year. Data products and solutions are hot topics now; operators need powerful and flexible solutions to manage explosively growing traffic. That's why we announced several products in this area.

First of all is the next generation of DPI platform with new features and increased capacity. Bundled with this platform, we propose the PCRF solution, Billshock prevention system and data local breakdown platform (LBO). For newly launched IMS networks, we suggest the GSM/IMS roaming solution; on the other hand, for MVNOs, we suggest fully functional GMSC and HLR/HSS with multi-IMS capabilities. We hope these products will be well received by the market. ■