For the communications industry, emerging markets include both developing countries and remote regions outside metropolitan areas in North America. They are currently heavily engaged in upgrading infrastructure for high-speed voice and data access to the world-wide internet.

Expected near-term returns focus on consumer markets for mobility and entertainment services, but we are interested here in business use – that is, in communication infrastructure as it enables a target market’s ability to participate and thrive in the global marketplace.

Western companies until now brought their product and business practices to the developing world and sold to small segments of affluent users. Now they must reposition themselves to penetrate to the vast purchasing power of less affluent segments. As a data point, Mouli Raman, the chief technology officer of OnMobile, a spin-off of Infosys Technologies three years ago, believes that the cost of mobile-phone networks must fall by a factor of 5 to succeed in the Indian market.

Delivery models appropriate to success in emerging markets include:

- **Process networks** as loosely controlled, supplier-driven network across many levels of a business process, available to assemblers who orchestrate them for specific opportunities, highly dependent on informal communication to act in unison.

- **Customer-driven modularity**, going beyond factory customization by streamlining complex product and service architecture to take advantage of less technical channels or less sophisticated customers with little staff or money for support, which requires strong feedback and results tracking to design and product management teams.

- **Specialization**, more than just selecting core competencies but also including building infrastructure and competency for collaboration to deliver on customer commitments.

- **Innovation networks** helping people collaborate on solving real problems, then capturing and sharing that knowledge across the organization.

- **Investment focus on slow and steady process and product innovation**, with an emphasis on improving flexibility and scalability at each step, illustrated by converged network pilots tightly aligned with specific business initiative to meet urgent need.

The good news is that if an enterprise redesigns their products and processes to compete successfully in a young, aggressive, and highly value-conscious market in India or China, it has gained a structure that will help them survive the exact same market pressures soon to come at home.