

Bezeq Pilots Smart City Trial



Gil Rosen, Chief Marketing & Innovation Officer, Bezeq, 8/29/2016

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Israeli service provider Bezeq is branching out beyond its telecom roots by booting up a smart city trial that's designed to monitor and manage waste management, pollution sensors, street cams, WiFi, water and energy management solutions.

Earlier this month, **Bezeq, The Israel Telecommunications Corp. Ltd.** (OTC: BZQIF), which is Israel's largest telecom company, announced that it was directing its attention toward developing smart cities. It's starting with a pilot program in Modi'in, a city with a population of about 100,000 that's located between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Telco Transformation caught up with Gil Rosen, chief marketing and innovation officer at Bezeq, to find out what's involved in setting up the systems and what benefits technology can bring to urban living.

Telco Transformation: Telefonica, Vodafone, T-Mobile and AT&T have used their own Internet technology infrastructure to set up smart cities, is Bezeq following in their footsteps or doing something different?

Gil Rosen: We believe that while the infrastructure is the core, the essence is the ability to deploy such a complex solution. To deliver a real smart city solution you need to deploy tens of thousands of sensors. They are set out in the streets, sometimes on top of poles, underground, in pavements, sewers, etc. After you deploy the sensors, you need to service, replace, repair, upgrade, etc. This is where the real DNA of Bezeq shines.

We believe that this is why telecommunication companies are well suited and have the advantage in the long run to provide such a service. While the network is the lifeline for the data, it's really about making sure the organization is ready and has the ability to deliver solutions on such a scale and with the complexities of urban landscapes and then maintain it over time. We believe we are ready to go and already started proving it on the ground.

TT: What goes into your smart city's infrastructure?

GR: The smart city solution includes the network layer, data collectors, analyzers, various work flow management modules, a management portal, big data, prediction modules and, of course, an ecosystem of IoT verticals such as waste management, pollution sensors, noise, street cams, WiFi, water and energy management solutions, etc. To that end, we deployed hundreds of sensors in Modi'in. All these were connected to our own cloud and management portal that allows the city to aggregate and manage the data as well as the different solution verticals.

Smarter City



Source: Bezeq

TT: Stella Handler, Bezeq's chief executive officer, has said that she only expects revenues to come in **after a decade**. What makes it sustainable for a telecom business to invest so much with so little ROI at the beginning?

GR: I believe this statement might have been translated literally when it was intended to say that we are not measuring this service on the same timescale as regular data services that have been out there for a long time. With smart cities I can actually foresee a much faster adoption lifecycle than other innovative software solution. Why? It just makes sense! It saves money for the city, it allows it to provide better customer service and transparency to its citizens, it creates an awareness level for the mayor and the city management team that is unmatched even to the level (in some instances) of predicting future events. For all these reasons I believe it will take much less than a decade to have a positive ROI.

TT: In what ways do you anticipate that smart features will enhance city life?

GR: When citizens have access to information that they never had before, when the city is able to monitor police noise, pollution levels, when information about availability of parking is better available, when sewages are fixed before they flood the public toilets or streets, when crime and vandalism are tracked in time and WiFi access is readily available, when location based information and services are provided, when garbage is collected on time and less trucks just drive around... all these things eventually lead to a much better, safer, healthier and richer standard of living in the city.

TT: Can you talk about the pilot program in Modi'in? Why did you select this particular city?

GR: Modi'in was selected for a number of reasons. It's fairly a young city with good and modern infrastructure. Equally important, its mayor has a vision for the city, which matches ours and he made sure his teams helped us deploy and test our solution so he can provide a better service for his constituents.

TT: Is the sensor data designed only for city officials, or would people in general benefit as well?

GR: It depends on the city. For instance we have hundreds of sensors measuring pollution, but the city may create one dashboard per area for the people that gives the average pollution level and no need to give access per sensor. Same goes for other environmental sensors. When it comes to parking sensors, each sensor is 'the service' so drivers would know whether there is a free parking space. On the other hand the city can put parking sensors where it chooses not to allow parking and not to give it as a service for drivers but for its own purposes to know that a certain spot is being used for parking when it's not supposed to. Combined with a camera system this can be immediately monitored and fines can be given or a city services deployed if this creates a specific hazard. The possibilities are endless.

— Ariella Brown, Technology Writer, **Telco Transformation**