Why did you want to join TM Forum’s Digital Ecosystem Advisory Board?
Because, in the future, 5G business models will be centered around digital ecosystems, surpassing our industry’s boundaries. TM Forum is at the forefront of this development.

How does your current role complement your contribution to this advisory board?
Having been involved in DT’s Group Innovation, with TM Forum Open APIs, our Easy to Partner Platform and recently executing machine learning projects, digital ecosystems are the logical next step. Furthermore, I am a guest lecturer at IMD (Lausanne) and Skolkovo (Moscow) business schools, having taught a larger number of (telecom) management boards.

What is your company’s approach to digital ecosystems? Are you developing a platform strategy?
In the US we are currently writing the next chapter of the Uncarrier success story with our Team of Experts and ‘5G for All’ approach; in Germany and Europe we have a solid 5G strategy that lays the foundation for our Smart-Campus, Smart-Cities, Smart-Health, Smart-Energy, etc. offerings.

If you are working on a platform strategy, what is your approach: Are you becoming a platform enabler to help partners develop marketplaces or are you developing your own marketplace?
We work on both. Uncarrier in the US, with T-Mobile Tuesdays, has been the prime example of a B2C marketplace. Our global systems integrator T-Systems is now rapidly evolving into the prime builder and operator for B2B marketplaces (our own and partnering), leading, for example, in the automotive (connected car/transport) and manufacturing (Industry 4.0) space. Also, our Ngena joint venture is a leading example of digital transformation and innovation in this field.

What role do APIs play in your digital ecosystem strategy?
A crucial role. They are the backbone of successful platforms, especially when they are based on TM Forum’s industry standards, as we are now surpassing the boundaries of our telecoms industry by far!

What are the key challenges to overcome in developing a digital ecosystem approach?
People, process and technology. People: we are rapidly implementing Agile work approaches, combining product and IT people in the same delivery teams. Process: see our industry-leading work with TM Forum on the Digital Maturity Model with our Detecon consulting team. Technology: leading the Telecom Infra Project (TIP) and our continuous work with all vendors and TM Forum members at large.

How important are network virtualization, cloud technology and 5G to your digital ecosystem strategy?
They are absolutely essential technologies for executing digital ecosystems. However, we are also very aware that these technologies will open up possibilities to players external to the industry to start entering our industry at full force and therefore have strongly build our Magenta brand.

Erik Meijer
Strategy GPM, Group Innovation, Deutsche Telekom

Read the full article at: inform.tmforum.org