

Pipeline's Guide to CTIA Wireless 2010

By *Ed Finegold*

Just when you've finally recovered from your unfortunate sangria experiment during Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, it's time to cowboy up for CTIA Wireless 2010 in the over-stimulation capitol of the world – Las Vegas. Fortunately, CTIA boasts a star-studded set of keynote sessions and a few events within the event that are worth checking out. Of course, as always, you can take our advice or simply fill your schedule with our recommends, copy someone else's notes, and spend a few days drinking meter-tall daiquiris at the craps tables... we'll give you a few tips for that plan too.

Monday, March 22 – Pre-Conference Events

If you're in on Monday, it's all about which crowd



you prefer to schmooze. You can fork over \$265 to play a round at the Bali Hai Golf Club in pursuit of the elusive CTIA Golf Championship you've always coveted. Or, if jocks and sales guys aren't your crowd, you can hit the WIP Mobile Jam Session (casual attire only and no PowerPoint, folks...) and meet the mega-geeks who are developing the next coolest thing you ever saw on a mobile phone. The golf tourney runs from 8 am to 3 pm, and the Jam Session from 9 am to 6 pm, so

it's really one or the other.

Tuesday, March 23 – Day One

The 9 to 11 am keynotes are worth catching, especially Randall Stephenson, Chairman,

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President and CEO for AT&T along with Ralph de la Vega, President and CEO, AT&T Mobility and Consumer Markets. Don't forget to bring your giant banner that asks, "Why is my iPhone so slow?" Your buddies from the WIP Mobile Jam Session will love it. Here's an important tip - If you have a CTIA VIP Smart Pass or Super Pass, don't forget to take advantage of the CTIA VIP Club where you can lounge, use private meeting spaces, and enjoy refreshments and WiFi for no extra charge. It opens at 8 am each day of the conference.

After the keynotes, the 11 am sessions are a letdown for OSS/BSS folks. The DiversityNXT event may be worth checking out as it claims VPs from AT&T, Verizon and Sprint will be there to discuss their supplier diversity strategies. Those VPs aren't named in the agenda though, so if they don't show, it's a good time to check out the massive exhibit hall and any cool toys you missed in Barcelona. At 1 pm you might want to hit "M-Commerce: Demystifying the World of Mobile Commerce" at the exhibit innovations stage in the North Hall. It's

(On Dan Hesse, CEO Sprint Nextel:)
We all admire what his unlimited plans did to the wireless market.

one of the few sessions really relevant to OSS/BSS folks because it looks at the mobile phone as a payment channel.

If none of the sessions after 11 am interest you, head for the craps table and enjoy yourself for a few hours. Remember, back up your line bets, max out the odds on your come bets, and stay off the proposition bets in the middle of the table – they're for suckers only. If the dice are cold and you don't mind a few glares from other players, play the "don't." It's a solid way to earn cash on cold shooters until a real Nick Papageorgio hot streak comes along.

Wednesday, March 24 – Day Two

Dan Hesse, CEO for Sprint Nextel Corp. headlines the day two keynotes along with Rene Obermann, CEO for Deutsche Telekom and Padmasree Warrior,



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CTO for Cisco. Do the world a favor and get the crowd chanting “HAIRCUT!” as soon as Hesse walks on stage. We all admire what his unlimited plans did to the wireless market, but we need some payback for those hubristic TV spots. Most relevant to OSS/BSS folks is Light Reading’s Policy Control, DPI, & the Mobile Packet Core conference-within-a-conference that kicks off at 11 am on Wednesday. Unfortunately, its agenda reads like a snoozer as it tackles mostly policy management and deep packet inspection technology and brings all vendors to the table other than Cricket Wireless, the lone CSP on its agenda.

BONUS PICK:

To perk back up on Wednesday, check out the PGA Mobile Panels and Cocktail Mixer from 3 to 6 pm in Room N256 (drinks don’t flow until 5). This isn’t another golf event (cheap Tiger Woods knock deleted) – it’s the Producers Guild of America. It’ll examine using wireless technology for video production and distribution, mobile animation and

games, and offers the “Augmented Reality Mobile Showcase.” The agenda reads “...enjoy cocktails as you explore the exciting world of augmented reality.” That sounds redundant, but nonetheless, this is a must-see.

If you’re into 1990s nostalgia, then you probably want to catch the Gin Blossoms performing at CTIA’s evening networking event over at the Hard

Chopra’s title is just too long to Tweet.

Rock Hotel and Casino. Of course, everything else you can do in Vegas is probably more entertaining than a Gin Blossoms show.

Thursday, March 25 – Day Three

Thursday is only a half day agenda. It sports an eclectic keynote panel hosted by CNBC reporter Michelle Caruso-Cabrera that includes film director James Cameron, Twitter Co-founder Biz Stone, and Aneesh Chopra, President and CTO for the US Office

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of Science and Technology Policy. (Stone is frustrated because Chopra's title is just too long to Tweet).

After that it's nothing but femtocells and vendors chatting about mobile advertising. That's your cue to exit. Tell your cabbie to take the short route – not the highway – to the airport and save yourself \$20 to throw in a slot machine when your flight gets delayed. And as always, intrepid traveler, may your goings be safe and prosperous.