An Exclusive Pipeline Q&A with the TMF

By Shawn Flemming

Whether you're a first-time attendee or seasoned participant of the TMW Conference, it's always a good idea to know what to expect, considering this is an industry where keeping abreast of the constant advances in technology and solutions can be a full-time job. So, Pipeline spoke with Claude Hary, VP Industry Communications for the TeleManagement Forum, in order to provide a general idea of this four-day event on the beautiful French Riviera.

Pipeline: What can visitors expect at this year's expo? Is there a prevailing theme?

TMF: We will feature over 83 exhibiting companies that are active in the OSS and BSS domain. Like every organization, the TMF is continuously improving its organization in order to better serve its members and the industry as a whole. The TMW Nice will be focused on how Telcos can transform their business operations. For example, executives will present how they are transforming their companies' operations and business processes, in order to meet the challenges of delivering and managing new generation fixed-mobile services.

We will also be making several major news announcements at the show including an important announcement on the first deliverables of the TM Forum's CO-OP initiative, driven by nine leading mobile equipment manufacturer members, to reduce the complexity of integrating mobile network equipment and management systems from multiple vendors.

Several new elements designed to help operators, vendors and software developers were added to the conference program. Including summits chaired by world calls experts who will be examining the key issues in the OSS/BSS industry and mega-trends debates on current hot industry issues.

Pipeline: What are some real problems the TMF has solved for SPs using ISV solutions/collaboration?

TMF: The TeleManagement Forum continues to tackle the most important issues for Service Providers including, Business Process management, integration between systems and solutions, SLAs, Revenue Assurance, Billing, and many more.

We actively work with the Service Providers, the software solutions and the equipment vendors, and continue to play a critical role in providing "Lean Operations" solutions, in the OSS and BSS area, for Service Providers. Our TM Forum flagship program NGOSS is becoming readily adopted as the standard guidelines for practice in the OSS/BSS space. Most important, operators world wide, use the NGOSS framework and components to deploy process strategies to meet the challenges of the competition. Other

programs, such as MTNM (providing element to network management standardized interface) are also becoming widely adopted.

Pipeline: What specific highlights of the Expo should visitors be aware of?

TMF: One of the key highlights will be our Catalyst Showcase. There will be eight OSS/BSS catalysts projects at this show reflecting the dynamic events happening in the telecom industry. Service providers, software solutions, and systems vendors companies from four different continents are contributing to this common effort.

Pipeline: What can we expect to see from the Catalysts at Nice this year?

TMF: Issues to be addressed include operational automation, business process management and revenue assurance. The specific catalyst projects to be on display are: Business Activity Monitoring; Business Agility; Business Process Management (Phase 2); Co-operative OSS Project (CO-OP); Data and Content Charging; NGOSS Model Driven Architecture Catalyst Project Team; Open OSS, and finally Reactive to Proactive Revenue Assurance – Closing the Loop.

Pipeline: Which SPs are participating in these projects?

TMF: Service provider participants include, but are not limited to SBC, BT, China Unicom, AT&T, Vodafone, and Swisscom.

Pipeline: What's the latest on the lean operations front?

TMF: The entire telecommunications industry is aware of and striving for lean operations. All telecom service providers recognize the need for lean operations and today's environment vendors are providing applications and technologies critical to achieving streamlined operations in this OSS/BSS nirvana.

Pipeline: What issues is your technical team tackling this year?

TMF: The TM Forum is made up of numerous technical teams. Some key issues being focused on are telecom service provider benchmarking, SLA guidelines, revenue assurance, NGN management, MTMN, Convergence, IP VPN, and many more.

Pipeline: The TMF certainty provides an array of topics and panel discussions each year. Who can we expect to hear from?

TMF: We are proud of our impressive speaker list which includes C-level executives from the world's most important telecom service providers and vendors. This show's speakers include: **Matthew Bross**, Chief Technology Officer, BT Group, **Stefano Pileri**, leader of Telecom Italia Group's Wireline Division, **Kerry Ritz,** President, Vonage UK, **Matt Desch**, Chief Executive Officer, Telcordia Technologies, and **David Sharpley**, Senior Vice President, Marketing and Product Management, MetaSolv Software.