

Pipeline

Knowledge Is Power

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Happy April to all of our readers! This month, we have an excellent variety of news to offer you including mergers, new product launches, and even some good news for loyal wireless customers. There are also a few sad bits of news due to, once again, the sagging economy but we all have to keep in mind that eventually there will come an economic spring time. Enjoy your Newswatch this month and thank you, as always, for reading Pipeline.

Wireless carriers are finally starting to reward their loyal customers rather than just trying to attract new ones while leaving the old ones to drool over new promotions. T-Mobile recently rolled out a promotion that gives customers who have a 22 month history with the company the chance to have an unlimited calling plan for \$49.99 per month. They're also offering a \$135 bill credit to loyal customers who add a new non-T-Mobile customer to their existing account. Sprint also began rewarding loyal customers in early February, though their plan was a bit different. The company is offering early

upgrades, tickets to shows and sporting events, anniversary rewards, discounts on accessories and various other perks. What do Sprint customers have to do to be eligible for such treats? Customers who have spent at least \$69.99 per month on an individual plan or \$99.99 per month on a shared plan for three consecutive months can take advantage of the benefits. Otherwise, one must have been a Sprint customer for **ten years**. There's quite a wide gap between 3 months and 10 years,

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but Sprint, as everyone knows, is desperate to hang onto its remaining customers. (Frankly, if they have a group of customers that's held on for ten years, I think they should be handing out far larger gifts than just free ringtones.)

Speaking of leaving current customers drooling over promotions, Amazon.com is now selling the T-Mobile G1 Android phone for just \$97.99 to new customers who sign a T-Mobile contract. Those of us current customers who paid nigh \$180 when it was new only 6 months ago may be left feeling a little sad, although not as sad as the original iPhone customers may have felt when the prices dropped several hundred dollars shortly after their release. The recent price drops for various types of smartphones are making them accessible to more customers, thereby giving service providers more revenue from upgraded data packages and taking more business away from the basic handset.

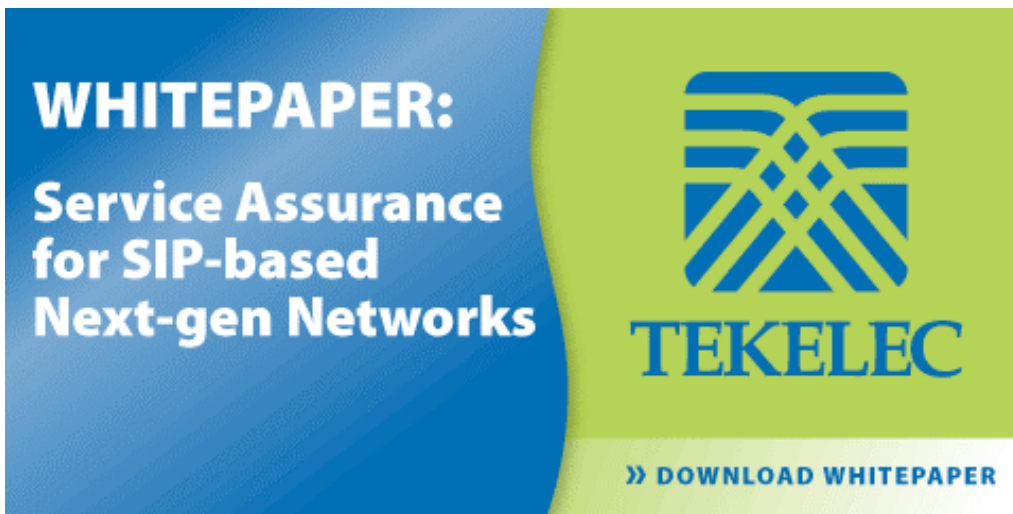
Google's Grand Central has now officially become Google Voice, a service that allows users to customize their phone services into one number that will ring various phones depending on who is calling, block calls, customize ring tones, greetings, and more. The switch will also be accompanied by the addition of new features, including SMS, among other things, and will begin accepting new customers soon. Until now, Grand Central was only accessible via invitation and after awhile, stopped accepting any new customers for the free service. Google Voice gives Google an edge in the telecom world, allowing customers of other carriers, both wireless and landline, to merge their services into one Google number, while giving customers options for call management that they do not have through their regular carrier. This is a venture that may turn out to be quite profitable for Google in the long run, and is another step forward in Google's plans to enter the wireless arena. With the ability to offer these types of services already in place, who's to say Google might not even look into offering their very own voice services, complete with Android-based handsets, in the future?

In the world of litigation, Sprint Nextel Corp. has been served with a class-action lawsuit from shareholders who feel that the company misrepresented its information regarding its merger with Nextel in order to keep stock prices from falling. Anyone who bought stock between Oct. 26 2006 and Feb. 27 2008 is covered under the lawsuit, which seeks as-of-yet undetermined damages.

Tribold has signed a strategic partnership with Polish consulting and solution implementation firm Invoide-Matrix in order to bring Tribold's Enterprise Product Management solution to market. Commenting on the partnership, Simon Muderack, Tribold's COO, said: "Poland is a strategically important market for Tribold, and to maximize the opportunity we knew that we had to partner with the clear leader in consultancy services to the telecommunications industry. By any measure, that

leader is Infovide-Matrix and we are certain that we have established what will be a long and profitable relationship for both companies.”

Subex and TTK (one of Russia’s top three fixed network providers) will be jointly providing managed services covering Fraud Management and Revenue Assurance to growing operators in Russia, due to a recently signed reseller agreement. “The Russian telecom market has seen extra-ordinary growth over the last couple of years. It has been our endeavor to entrench ourselves deeper in the local markets and provide operators, ISPs and large corporations with world-class managed services. This partnership with a global leader like Subex will help us further meet all the requirements of today’s operators, also in hard days of current world economic crises,” said Alexander Zolotnikov, Head of the Information Security Department, TTK.



MTN Group, a telecommunications group operatin in 21 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, has chosen Fundamo, a specialized mobile banking and payment software solutions provider, to provide their Mobile Wallet solution to power the “MTN MobileMoney” service for MTN customers. The deal is worth \$9.7 million USD and will provide basic financial services to subscribers in Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle-East. “We selected Fundamo for two key reasons: because they could support the concurrent multi-country roll-out and aggressive time to market that we required for our project and because their solution is mature, scalable and well tested in developing markets, as well as being designed from the ground up to be fully compliant with all banking regulations. With Fundamo’s future proof solution we can take full advantage of the mobile payment market,” says Dare Okoudjou, Head of Mobilemoney International Development for MTN Group.

Highdeal is pleased to announce that Wateen, a Pakistan-based Telecom service provider, has selected Highdeal Transactive for the pricing and rating of their post-paid IMS services. "Wateen is committed to delivering a broad range of reliable, affordable and quality customer-centric services in a competitive fast moving market. The Highdeal solution provides the pricing and rating agility and ease-of-use Wateen needs in order to fulfill our commitment to offering affordable communications services that meets and exceed our customers' demands," said Tariq Malik, CEO Wateen.

Oracle announced that Etihad Atheeb Telecom "GO," the newest telecoms operator in Saudi Arabia has deployed Oracle's billing and OSS software to support its WiMax broadband services. "Considering that IP services are highly complex and expensive to launch, manage and configure, GO implemented Oracle because of its strengths in providing an end-to-end approach that simplifies and enhances our IT environment," said Craig Humphreys, vice president, information technology at GO.

Telcordia has announced the availability of the newest version of Telcordia® IP Assure, a software solution that offers total IP network awareness. The new version is designed for large-scale networks and includes a web-based hosted service model for management of a global, diverse network infrastructure; a scalable distributed architecture that handles increased network loads; and a hierarchical tenant/user model, among other features.

Sony Ericsson has named Ron Louks, the company's deputy CTO and current head of technology of the Americas division, as the new CTO, replacing Mats Lindoff. The leadership exchange will begin on April 1st.

Telecom news source RCR Wireless is officially closed for business as of March, 2009 after 25 years. The now defunct publication's website stated briefly that the economy is to blame for the closing, with Crain Communications Chairman Keith E. Crain saying that "... it pains us to make this move but the economy gives us no other choice."