

SUPERCOMM 2005 Expo Guide: Insider Tips



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By Tim E. Young, Industry Reporter

It's here! The biggest and most anticipated expo of the season, SUPERCOMM 2005 runs June 6-9, and what better venue than The Windy City? For the second year in a row, Chicago welcomes over 30,000 telecommunications professionals from around the world for a few days of sheer tech madness. Though, this 'must-attend' telecom event is in its final year, all indications seem to suggest that this year's event will be one for the books. So grab your Blackberry, and head to Chicago's McCormick Center, bursting with everything on your wish list.

This year, SUPERCOMM boasts an impressive roster of speakers, a huge variety of education opportunities, pavilions showcasing a wide variety of technologies, as well as niche programs to keep attendees abreast of the latest changes in the telecommunications industry. As with any event, SUPERCOMM 2005 has tons of shortcuts, highlights, buzzwords, and pitfalls you should be aware of. Paying attention to these steps can make your experience at SUPERCOMM as grand as the scope of the event itself.

Tip: *To make the conference run more smoothly for the throngs, TIA has developed a system called TIAanalytics. This system is available on the SUPERCOMM website, and it helps to craft a conference schedule based on your needs and interests, and allows pre-show contact between vendors and potential customers.*

Conferences

This year's conference is massive, with segments covering issues from all points on the telecom spectrum. Ostensibly, there are four smaller events going on

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simultaneously, each focusing on a different element of the industry. These four divisions, Enterprise Networks, Broadband, Converged Wireless, and Infrastructure, each have elements that are singular to their respective subfields, with a degree of overlap between the conferences. That is to say, while SUPERCOMM is indeed a single event with a single schedule, they have created four divisions to help provide focus direction for the attendees. After all, with an event of this scope, no attendee could capture all there is to see in three days.

***Tip:** Within the 'Infrastructure' sub-conference is where most OSS professionals will feel most at home.*

There are a wide variety of free conference programs available, and other programs that require an additional paid registration not to mention plenty of plenary panels, receptions, and opportunities for matchmaking with diverse and international suppliers. The organizations who own and run SUPERCOMM, USTA and TIA, will be featuring their own sub-conferences on key issues. Likewise, the International Engineering Consortium (IEC), Enterprise Communications Consortium (ECC), and other organizations will be hosting their own sessions, such as:

The Regulatory Landscape (TIA)

With changing definitions, old regulatory mores may no longer apply. "We're living in very interesting times," says Grant Seiffert, VP of External Affairs and Global Policy for TIA, "convergence is changing definitions." While SUPERCOMM's focus historically has been strictly technology and the uses of technology, the TIA Convergence programming, now in its second year, hopes to inject policy discussion into the mix. TIA will be presenting a session called "Convergence: Roadmap to Growth," which will run Tuesday and Wednesday. The event will include speeches and panel discussions by members of the industry and representatives from the FCC discussing the regulatory landscape of the industry.

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Tip: Topics especially aimed at OSS types also include:

“Assuring QoS for the Triple Play” -12:30pm, Wednesday, 6/8.

“Metro Area Optical Networks Sweep the Scene” –12:30pm, Monday, 6/6 (Free).

“Operational Support Challenges of Enterprise Networks” –12:15pm, Tuesday
6/7

Supplier Diversity Summit

A different issue that will be confronted at SUPERCOMM 2005 is less technical, but in many ways just as important. The TIA Supplier Diversity Summit is in its tenth year, and in that amount of time has gone from a relatively small organization addressing a generally overlooked issue to a vociferous and powerful advocate of diversity businesses in the telecom industry. In addition to panel discussions about the past, present, and future of Supplier Diversity, the summit also includes matchmaking sessions with supplier diversity advocates. “TIA looks at this issue strictly as a business issue,” says Maryann Lesso, TIA’s Associate VP of Membership. “It’s not about diversity in the workplace. It’s all about Supply Chain diversity, and giving the minority, women, and disabled veteran-owned companies an opportunity to get into the procurement mix.”

Tip: *This year, the Summit celebrates its growth and the steady chain of milestones along the way with an all-day conference on Monday, June 6th.*

Exhibits

SUPERCOMM 2005 will feature over 650 exhibits from every facet of the telecom industry. Take a look at Pipeline’s “Expo Highlights” for an in-depth look at some of the standouts.

Keynote Speeches

The keynote speeches for the at-large SUPERCOMM 2005 will be delivered by a ‘who’s who’ of heavy hitters in the telecommunications world. High ranking executives from EDS, Bechtel, and Motorola kick off the event with the Monday

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morning keynote, "Large Enterprise Network Directions: The Keys to Productivity & Profitability." (8:30am-9:30am); John Chambers, President and CEO of Cisco is slated to present the Tuesday afternoon keynote address (4:00-4:45pm); Verizon's Chairman & CEO Ivan Seidenberg will be delivering the Tuesday morning keynote, *Future Proof: Creating a 21st Century Communications Industry* (8:30-9:00am); BellSouth Chairman and CEO F. Duane Ackerman is lined up for the Wednesday mid-day keynote (11:30am-noon). Other all-star plenary panels are slated throughout the event and more specific addresses on everything from the state of regulations in an age of convergence to supplier diversity.

TIP: *Catch the keynotes to hear the voice of experience, but don't count on intimacy. Balance these huge addresses with plenty of direct contact at the expo and in the forums.*

Technology Pavilions

Hands-on demonstrations are always crowd pleasers, and true to form, SUPERCOMM 2005 has more than a few on hand.

SUPERDemos, a collection of large-scale demonstrations hosted by Metro Ethernet Forum and Optical Internetworking Forum will feature a staggering array of services, including high-definition, 3-D theatre delivered via Ethernet. There will be chances to observe the network in action and have some one-on-one contact with industry leaders. There will also be booths hosted by member companies of the MEF, and a free iPod drawing, which never hurts.

The OIF booth will give a glimpse into a ten-week, multi-nation interoperability demo that has been taking place since April. Seven member carriers (including AT&T, China Telecom, Deutsche Telekom, France Telecom, NTT Laboratories, Telecom Italia and Verizon) are providing the test facilities, engineering staff, and real-world network connectivity in what is touted as the most comprehensive network test ever. The booth features a public demonstration of the testing and booth tours every two hours (from 10am to 4pm) daily.

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The “10 Hottest Technologies” pavilion will house the latest in technologies like OFDM, IMS, and Copper Pair Bonding.

Specialty pavilions also include the TeleManagement Forum-sponsored “Lean Operators Showcase,” the pulver.com-sponsored SIP Pavilion, and international pavilions, showcasing the technologies of Italy, Korea, Ontario, and Taiwan.

Final and Most Important Tip: *As for your visit to Chicago, never count on the weather because, good or bad, it's subject to change at the drop of a hat; never order a large deep-dish pizza unless you are unbelievably famished or are with a party of four, and finally, expect your hot dogs to come without ketchup, but with celery salt.*