

## **Pipeline Exclusive Q&A with TIA, USTA, and the IEC**



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*By Timothy E. Young*

Where will your company place its trade shows dollars in the years to come? With SUPERCOMM gearing up for its last show, we decided ask Matthew Flanigan, President of TIA, Walter McCormick, Jr, President and CEO of USTA, and Roger Plummer, Managing Director of the IEC, the reasons behind drawing the curtain, and what we can expect to see from these organizations in the future.

**Pipeline:** According to the event history on the SUPERCOMM site, the event has its origins in telephone trade shows of the 1950's. A whole lot has changed since then. What technologies are likely to be the talk of the expo this year?

**USTA:** This year, anything IP is hot. USTA is holding a two-day conference at SUPERCOMM devoted specifically to IP-Video and I expect we will see a lot of new and exciting products on the exhibit floor. We'll also see a lot of new business opportunities for service providers including managed services for Enterprise networks.

**TIA:** I think what's happening with Convergence, VoIP, and the whole broadband expansion is important. VoIP needs a broadband pipe to ride on, and last year broadband really grew at SUPERCOMM and was probably one of the most important items. And you're going to continue to see broadband explode along with VoIP and other applications that are going to ride on the internet.

**Pipeline:** SUPERCOMM is a massive event with between 650 and 675 exhibitors. At an event this huge, how does someone make the most of it?

**TIA:** Last year TIA introduced what we call TIAanalytics, which is a really valuable tool that allows both attendees and exhibitors to prearrange meetings, based on the kind of products or services you're offering or seeking. That's going to help set the stage, because it is almost impossible to go around and visit all the companies.

**Pipeline:** Are there any specific events that the OSS crowd shouldn't miss?

**USTA:** USTA is sponsoring two conferences at SUPERCOMM that will specifically appeal to the OSS crowd. The IP-Video conference will tee up the latest technologies for deploying video and the Telecom Engineering Conference will have a lot of great resources for OSS.

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**TIA:** SUPERCOMM has over 200 educational sessions that touch every possible facet of telecom, whether that's Enterprise, the optical side, VoIP, SIP, WiFi, WiMax...the list goes on and on. I think every subject you could imagine is going to be covered in one of the sessions. That's the one thing truly unique about SUPERCOMM. It allows you to not only see and touch the equipment and talk to the vendors directly, you can go to one of the seminars and get all the information you need to make your company competitive in this marketplace.

**Pipeline:** TIA and USTA built this event, so they've obviously been involved since the beginning. How long has the IEC been involved in SUPERCOMM?

**IEC:** IEC has been involved with SUPERCOMM since 1995 when it was brought on as Program Manager to grow the show's attendance level which had dropped and become stagnant.

**Pipeline:** After eighteen years and immense growth and change, SUPERCOMM is in its last year. Why?

**USTA:** At the end of SUPERCOMM 2005, USTA and TIA will complete a five-year contract and both organizations decided to go their own way.

**TIA:** I think both organizations couldn't come to terms in expanding the role of SUPERCOMM, and it was decided to go separately, so that's what we've done. It's been a great run and a good relationship, but most things come to an end at some point.

**Pipeline:** What's next for TIA?

**TIA:** We'll be offering GlobalComm in June of 2006. Since telecom is no longer a domestic product and most of the 700 TIA members have products that they sell internationally, we're going to further expand the role of international companies; hence the name GlobalComm.

**Pipeline:** What's next for USTA? Your other flagship expo, Telecom has had a lower attendance record than that of SUPERCOMM. Do you think that this will change after SUPERCOMM is no more?

**USTA:** TELECOM'05 in Las Vegas will be a smaller boutique show, but a very important event. It will bring together all sectors of the rapidly evolving telecom industry. It will also be a preview for TelecomNEXT to be held March 2006 in Las Vegas.

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TelecomNEXT is where the buyers will be. It will bring together communications service providers from all segments of the industry - wireless, wireline, cable, satellite, content providers, and innovative equipment suppliers. Already, we've seen tremendous interest in the show and we have a terrific line-up of speakers.

**Pipeline:** How about for the IEC? What's next for you?

**IEC:** In the next twelve months IEC will present three DesignCon events (Santa Clara, New England and Munich) for design engineering professionals, as well as our Broadband World Forum exhibit and conference in Europe and Asia involving leading global service providers and vendors.

IEC also conducts an annual Executive ComForum where industry leaders gather in a workshop setting to share views and insights on the very latest technology and business issues facing the industry. IEC has grown to the stature it currently has in the industry by being a catalyst for change and by working with all industry companies and organizations where it can add value. The Consortium represents a level-playing field and treats all parties equally. That's why our programs have such wide support and acceptance.

**Pipeline:** So no closed door after the curtain falls on SUPERCOMM 2005?

**IEC:** I think quite the contrary. The doors are, as far as IEC is concerned, more open than ever.

**Pipeline:** Is there anything else you would like readers to know about SUPERCOMM 2005 and why they should be a part of it?

**TIA:** I think that it's an important event for anyone who touches communications, whether you're a service provider offering services to the public or you're an Enterprise company trying to stay competitive in the marketplace, it's a 'can't miss' event, and we look forward to seeing everyone there!

*Timothy Young is a freelance industry reporter who has worked for numerous websites and publications over the past few years. A native of Sumter, South Carolina and a graduate of Appalachian State University, Timothy now resides in Chicago.*