

Pipeline

Knowledge Is Power

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NXTComm Hits Sin City

An Interview with Wayne Crawford by Tim Young

With NXTComm 2008 on the horizon, we took a moment to speak with Wayne Crawford, Executive Director for NXTComm. He filled us in on the show's relocation from Chicago to Las Vegas, as well as other changes that the show promises for this year.

Pipeline: This is the first year that NXTComm is going to happen in Las Vegas. Do you think location makes a significant difference on the outcome of the event? For instance, will it affect the type of attendees you attract?

Wayne Crawford: I don't think it will affect the type of attendees, but it will affect the attendees from a geographic standpoint. Any event in the world, large or small, has a regional component to it. The attendee base is going to be a little more concentrated around the area of the event. Our attendee pre-registration data is bearing that out. We're seeing fewer attendees from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana, and are seeing more attendees from the western states, especially California. Another interesting thing is that our international numbers are up. A lot of U.S. cities are a good draw, internationally. Vegas is a particularly good draw, internationally, particularly for attendees from Asia. I think the strength of the dollar (or lack thereof) is having a positive impact on the event. There is another phenomena, and that's an increase in the activity of the entertainment community. We are drawing better for that event in Las Vegas, due to the proximity to Southern California, than we did in Chicago.

Pipeline: According to your website, NXTComm attracted 15,273 attendees to its debut in Chicago last year. It looks like your pre-event emails are suggesting you may have more than 20,000 attendees this year. How close are you to achieving that many pre-registered attendees?

Wayne Crawford: It's a little too early to tell at this point. Sixty to seventy percent of our registrants come in on the last 30 days prior to the show. We're tracking pretty well right now. I'd hesitate to make any hard predictions since we don't have any track record on the West Coast. I can tell you that our preliminary numbers are pretty strong so far. The difference between the two years, though, seems to be the geographic makeup more than anything.

Pipeline: How does the agenda and format of this show differ from last year's

NXTComm?

Wayne Crawford: We've tried to make the show a little broader by bringing in more of the entertainment aspect. That's reflected in our keynote speech (*Survivor producer Mark Burnett*), as well as in our conference programming. For example, while our conference programming has always been focused on nuts-and-bolts engineering information, this year we're focusing a little more on the business issues affecting some of the smaller telcos. We're focusing more on the enterprise community. We're also touching on hot topics in events like our "green" summit.



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Pipeline: Sometimes large shows can be a bit daunting for exhibitors and attendees alike. Does NXTComm offer any services to ensure that vendors and prospective buyers are connected?

Wayne Crawford: We do, actually. We've tried to do a couple of things. We've tried to make our website more comprehensive and better organized. In addition, we do have a tool called "My NXTComm." Once an attendee is preregistered, they get emails inviting them to join the portal. There are a variety of services within the portal that match them up with exhibiting companies they may want to see, as well as match them up with peers if they want to network. It also helps them identify conference programming they might be interested in.

Pipeline: Did you offer that at last year's NXTComm?

Wayne Crawford: We did, but it being the first year, we didn't promote it all that heavily. We're trying to be more consistent and comprehensive about how we approach that this year. We're trying to get a higher penetration rate in terms of usage. There are a couple of different solutions that show organizers can use. We use one by a company called BDMetrics that we feel is the most powerful and most comprehensive. It does a lot of data mining and has a lot of algorithms built into it to help guide the attendee to things they might want to see. On the other side of it, there's a corresponding exhibitor feature called SmartBooth. Exhibitors can use this to reach out and identify individuals they want to see. It helps them proactively go out and try to initiate a connection, but isn't so overbearing that they can spam an

attendee. They can initiate a connection and the attendee can accept or reject that.

Pipeline: Our readers are specifically interested in the OSS/BSS side of telecommunications. Which of your keynote speakers do you think will have the most valuable information to share with Pipeline readers?

Wayne Crawford: We have a great keynotes lineup. We have the very large service providers well represented, but also have one session in which we're talking about broadband and other services in the local loop. We've got a panel with executives of XO, Cincinnati Bell, and Telus, which are all smaller than the giants, and they're talking about things they're doing with their businesses. We also have Scott McNealy from Sun that's speaking. He's got a pretty good message on software and services and open source.

Pipeline: Along those same lines, Pipeline readers would be interested in learning more about the OSS/BSS Pavilion. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

Wayne Crawford: Certainly. It's called the OSS/BSS Corridor, and it's something we're trying for the first time this year. On our show floor, we've tried to add a few features like that: Places to go to on the show floor that have a specific focus. The companies participating in that include Aricent, Omni, Amartus, and Sonus. Those are the companies they would be able to see if they went to that area. (Several other companies of interest to the OSS/BSS set are highlighted below. -ed.)

Pipeline: You're giving quite a bit of press to the keynote address from Mark Burnett, the producer of Survivor, going so far as to have an entire "evening with Survivor Producer Mark Burnett" that includes wine and cheese. Does this represent an increased focus on the content/entertainment side of the telecom market?

Wayne Crawford: It does. As an event, we're trying to offer a soup-to-nuts approach to technologies and services that serve this particular industry. That means everything from fiber and routers and switches to applications and services. It's transforming from an engineering event, like Supercomm was in the past, to a show about all things broadband. We certainly don't want to forget about our core. The engineering and hardware pieces are still important and well-represented at the event.

However, you certainly have to recognize video content as the single biggest driver for infrastructure and investment. As a part of that, we need to be focusing on the events and the models that a guy like Mark Burnett, who is creating video content for a number of different platforms, sees this. Where is he taking his empire over the next several years? Where does he see the growth and the trends?

Pipeline: You're certainly not alone in including more of the content side. It's something that I see even smaller events paying more attention to. It's something telecommunications companies have to always be considering. Otherwise the content companies can run an end-route around them and start incorporating their own virtual networks and beyond, bypassing the service provider altogether.

Wayne Crawford: I think one of the biggest things that the CSPs are struggling with, from Verizon and AT&T to your rural provider somewhere in Kansas, is that they don't want to be dumb pipes that are commoditized for voice. They want new and exciting revenue models. That includes triple play and quad play and what have

you. They'll continue to carry voice, but they want to branch out as well.

Pipeline: Did you have anything else to convey to our readers about the event?

Wayne Crawford: Well, we're going to Vegas. It's a new location. We're very excited about it. We're trying to bring in some new audiences from out in California and some of the other western states, but we're also trying to maintain the audience throughout the country, and worldwide. I think some of our international marketing is starting to pay off as well. We're seeing high numbers of pre-registrations, internationally. We're also looking forward to returning to Chicago in 2009. That's always been an excellent draw for us. There's a strong business community there. We're very proud of our keynotes lineup. We're also very excited about our co-location with Infocomm, which is the event for the professional A/V industry. We expect to get some decent crossover from them and vice versa.



Some Must-Sees.

Here are some companies that may be of particular interest to the OSS/BSS set at NXTComm:

ALCATEL-LUCENT (Booth 3116, South Upper Hall)

At NXTComm 2008, Alcatel-Lucent will highlight technologies, systems and services that enable service providers to transform their services, networks and business to deliver secure, personalized applications and services to their customers. Alcatel-Lucent's objective is to address the challenges service providers and enterprises face as they address changing end-user behavior, new business models, and market dynamics.

Alcatel-Lucent's NXTComm demonstrations will include an application suite for mobile social networking and mobile marketing; a managed customer interaction services solution; a targeted advertising application; end-to-end IMS integration involving voice, video, IM and presence; interactive mobile TV; multi-screen entertainment application for any time, any where personalized content; service delivery and quality assurance solutions to stream-line service creation and drive

down costs; two key architectures that can enable the quality required – Triple Play Service Delivery Architecture (TSPDA) and Mobile Entertainment Transport Architecture (META).

ACTELIS (Booth SL8916)

Actelis Networks® will be showcasing its award-winning Ethernet in the First Mile products that they feel will enable telcos and enterprises to fully leverage the benefits of Ethernet networking. One of these new products is the ML650 Ethernet Access Device, providing a combination of Ethernet and TDM circuits for 2G, 3G and 3.5G base stations with up to 100 Mbps of connectivity delivered over existing copper facilities. Actelis' goal is to enable mobile carriers to utilize CES pseudo wires to complement and, ultimately, replace traditional T1/E1s. The ML650 EAD implements a clocking solution with timing accuracy and resiliency equal to or better than that provided by traditional T1/E1 circuits. The ML650 EAD is the industry's first product that can truly support a comprehensive migration strategy for mobile backhauling

POLYSTAR (Booth SL5323, Lower floor)

Polystar Group will showcase its new Ultimate Customer Experience Management Solution alongside SOLVER, a high-performance load and stress test tool for wireless telecommunication networks. Polystar invites attendees to visit their booth and learn about SOLVER and how they feel it helps to isolate and correct problems before they affect the end-users, and to learn about SOLVER for SIP and IuPS and how SOLVER can be integrated into test-automation plans. Polystar experts will also be on hand to discuss their ideas for establishing a customer-centric business strategy that results in customer loyalty and company profitability, effectiveness, and growth, and about how their Media Probe helps to perform pay-load analysis, to accurately receive, aggregate and sort terabits of real-time data and present it on a per user basis

QUINTREX (Booth SL2910)

Quintrex Data Systems Corp., a provider of telecommunications software solutions since 1979, offers integrated Billing, Customer Care, Marketing, Plant & Financial solutions for the Quad Play. Quintrex has developed an Integrated Marketing Solution & Bi-Directional Mapping Interface that they feel will combat the challenges of increased competition. The suite of marketing products encompasses Target, Suggestive, Campaign and Promotional Marketing, Bundling and an integrated CRM solution. The Bi-Directional mapping interface is non-vendor specific and allows CSRs to immediately assign plant facilities, give techs instant access to customer information, and save time while reducing errors with one-time data entry.

ATVENT (Booth SL2409)

At NXTcomm08, Atvent Solutions will showcase its integrated OSS package MobileNet, which is designed to increase the efficiency and reliability of MSO and Public Utilities network operations by helping to locate, evaluate, and restore network issues. Field personnel are able to capture and share information through a customized client interface, and managers can follow their operations through real-time web reports that aid in performance tracking, quality assurance, and various other purposes. With MobileNet, clients can attain greater efficiency in both the field

and in the office.

TEKTRONIX (Booth SU3411)

Tektronix Communications will be showcasing solutions for converged networks testing, deployment, and management needs for leading network operators and equipment manufacturers. The technology highlights are set to include a comprehensive suite of test, measurement, monitoring, and management tools for IMS; products for full triple play or even quad play networks; a variety of Mobile WiMAX test solutions, including Functional test and protocol monitoring solution, advanced troubleshooting applications for network and service analysis, and specialized software for real-time spectrum analyzer; and LTE, because the competitive pressure of various potential 4G technologies (LTE, WiMAX, UMA) makes time to market a critical component for success.

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