



## Go Rats!

### A Word From the Editor

By Scott St. John

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About 15 years and 30 pounds ago, I played high school football for the [Ann Arbor Huron River Rats](#). And, of all the proverbial lessons I've learned as a result of the experience, one lesson has always remained true: keep your eye on the ball.

It doesn't seem to matter whether you're intercepting the tie-breaking touchdown pass, providing cellular service, or developing OSS software; you must keep your eye on the ball in order to be successful. Lack of focus, product direction, or understanding of your customers' needs will cost you the game.

The July issue of Pipeline explores this issue from the mobile service provider and OSS vendor perspective; the ball in this case is the service provider's customers' experience. To illustrate the disconnect, there's a significant problem when customers are being sold on color screens and PDA phone functionalities when reliable, uninterrupted service has still not been fully achieved. As far as fumbles go, that's a good one.

To further the point, the unadulterated push for new services, like VoIP and next generation networks (e.g. 3G), is reminiscent of that play where the receiver catches the ball, but runs towards the wrong end-zone. If you don't first understand your customers' needs, then chances are you're not providing the value they require and you are running in the wrong direction as a result. That's equally as true for service providers as it is for OSS vendors. If either is going to be ultimately successful, they will need to make a commitment to understanding the customer experience and delivering the value the customer desires.

Understanding what can be done, can't be done, is being done, and is not being done to achieve this synergy with the customer experience is the first step on the journey of delivering real value through the food chain. Some of the other steps are outlined in this issue too, but the bottom-line is always a happy customer; no matter how big, or little a fish you are.

I hope you enjoy the July issue of Pipeline...and Go River Rats!

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