

Fall Events Rundown

By *Tim Young, Editor-in-Chief*

It's right around this time each year that I'm always thinking the same thing: Where did the summer go? We're steaming right through bathing suit season and into the latter portion of the year, which means it will soon be time for all things autumnal: Pumpkin pie, raking leaves, and fall tradeshow.

In preparation for tradeshow season, we've gathered a cross-section of some of the events taking place around the globe. Here's our take, in chronological order.

Commworld

Aug. 19-21

Pasay, Philippines

Before August is out, there's a chance to see what various ICT (information and communication technology) industry types are up to in the South Pacific. Produced by Global-Link Marketing, which produces trade shows about everything from plastics to mining, the show is in its 8th year and boasts over 9,000 attendees and over 270 exhibiting companies. The subject matter is a tad broad, covering telecom from antennas to mobile gaming to vision mixers, but if the Philippines is in your geographic footprint, Pasay might be a solid place to do some networking.

COMPTEL Plus Fall

Sept. 12-15

Dallas, Texas

Moving into September, the volume of shows steps up a bit, beginning with COMPTEL's fall offering, taking place in Dallas. The show, hosted by the DC-based CSP/supplier advocacy group, pulled in 1,800 last fall and 2,100 the previous year. While these numbers

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aren't enormous, the CLEC community traditionally represented by COMPTEL is in heavy concentration at their events, and their fall show is really the COMPTEL show of record. If PAETEC, RCN, and their brethren are your major targets, or you just want to get a scoop on the next big CLEC acquisition, this is the show for you.

FTTH Conference and Expo

Sept 12-16

Las Vegas, Nev.

However, if you're more interested in FTTH, a stronger show for you might be found by heading west from Dallas to a place that's less ten-gallon-hat and more four-dollar-buffet. The FTTH Conference in Vegas promises to be the "biggest and best" fiber event in the industry. Despite Verizon's scaledown in FTTH deployment, the FTTH Council has been bullish on fiber deployment, and has keynotes from Australia's NBN and Canada's Bell Aliant to prove it. Promising 2,000 attendees and 130 exhibitors, it's a slightly more modest show, in terms of attendees, than the council saw in, say, 2007, but is still a strong indicator that FTTH is still moving onward and upward.

NTCA Fall Conference

Sept 19-22

St Louis, Mo.

The National Telecommunications Cooperative Association's annual conference contains everything such a conference is expected to: A golf outing, entertainment by a WWII USO-style song-and-dance ensemble, a "spouse session" featuring culinary comedy, and a country music concert/banquet. In between, however, will be some discussion on the ups and downs of providing communications services in the rural US.

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Carrier Ethernet World Congress
Sept 20-23
Warsaw, Poland

This, the flagship event of the Metro Ethernet Forum, features 150+ speakers and an expo floor with 35 or so exhibiting companies all based around the possibilities of carrier Ethernet. And while those speakers aren't always from the top levels of their respective organizations, the sheer scope of their representative CSPs is impressive. BT, Verizon, Telecom Italia, KPN, Bharti, and many others are all represented. In addition, a wide array of analysts (from Yankee Group, Infonetics, Analysys Mason, Ovum, and others) will unpack the ins and outs of the field.

Billing Output 2010
Sept 22-23
Miami, Fla.

This event, put on by TeleStrategies, features programming intended to "help operators reduce print fulfillment costs, increase efficiency, improve customer experience, leverage print investments and expedite the revenue collection process." It's a very focused show, so if you're not directly involved in the billing process, there's not much use in attending. However, the '09 event did feature speakers from

AT&T, Global Crossing, Verizon, Embarq, and other CSPs, and there's something to be said for pairing focus with depth.

NECA 2010 Expo
Oct. 10-14
Las Vegas, Nev.

NECA, the National Exchange Carrier Association, is made up of well over 1300 local telcos, with most of those being RLECs from around the country. The group's 2010 Expo will focus on government regulation and the national broadband plan, which doesn't quite register on anyone's "sexy-meter", but

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is by any estimate a pretty significant occurrence. While there is an expo floor, the focus here seems to be on education. This isn't a show for everyone, but if you're a telecom co-op in the States, you might have just found an excuse to book a trip to Vegas.

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“If you’ve ever said the words “Latin” and “America” in the same sentence, you probably already have plans to attend FutureCom.”

**4G World
Oct. 18-21
Chicago, Ill.**

4G World attempts to cover, according to show organizers, “the complete 4G and mobile Internet ecosystem.” That’s an aggressive agenda, and the show’s projected 10,000 attendees (up 40% from last year) is equally aggressive. The event spans 4 days, and sports 5 summit tracks and 175 speakers, and has a number of programs hosted by various industry forums and associations that make 4G World sort of a confederation of events under a single umbrella.

**North Africa Com
Oct 26-27
Cairo, Egypt**

In its fifth year, North Africa Com is a relatively small

event by most industry standards, drawing a little over 600 attendees, but is the seminal event in the region, drawing in service providers from Africa and the Middle East. Speakers include leaders from CSPs in Egypt (Vodafone Egypt, Telecom Egypt,) Sudan (Canar), Lebanon (MDC), Qatar (qTel), Jordan (Orange Jordan), and Sub-Saharan Africa (Expresso Telecom), along with a number of other CSPs active in the region. There’s an exceptional volume of growth in the countries from which likely delegates will be traveling, so this is an important show for those looking to grow into developing markets.

**FutureCom
Oct 26-28
Sao Paulo, Brazil**

If you currently do business in Latin America, or if you plan on doing business in Latin America, or if anyone at your firm has ever said the words “Latin” and “America” in the same sentence, you probably already have plans to attend FutureCom. This event is massive (29,000 attendees) and is rife with the very players that shows in other regions have proven less-than-adept at pulling in. Sponsors include Claro, Telefonica, NSN, Ericsson, and Alcatel-Lucent, and conference topics range from cloud computing to regulation to telepresence. A must-attend for the CALA region.

The advertisement is a KnowledgeCast Webinar banner. On the left, the Pipeline logo is displayed in white on a black background, with the tagline "Your OSS/BSS Information Source." below it. On the right, the text "KnowledgeCast Webinar" is at the top. Below that, the main title "The Business Case for Policy and Charging Controls" is centered. Underneath the title, it says "Featuring" followed by the logos for PENET and CISCO. At the bottom of the banner, a button reads "Click HERE to REGISTER NOW!". Below the banner, a separate button says "Click this ad for more information".

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Broadband World Forum Europe

Oct. 26-28

Paris, France

Also running concurrently with North Africa Com and FutureCom is BBWF Europe, making for a nice triumvirate of regional shows rounding out October. BBWF is a pretty global show, however, and is really the flagship event for the forum, drawing over 6000 attendees and sporting a strong expo component. The speaker lineup is solid as well, with C-Levels from Deutsche Telekom, Huawei (the always-sharp Matt Bross), Chungwa Telecom, and Australia's National Broadband Network. We've seen some pretty interesting discussion take place at BBWF in the past, and it will be interesting to see how this event stacks up.

Management World Americas

Nov. 9-11

Orlando, Fla.

TM Forum's Americas show has the misfortune of being constantly compared to its elder sister, the Forum's spring event, and remains about a third the size. However, it's fair to say that there is a dearth of quality OSS/BSS shows in North America these days, and even if Management World Americas has flagged a bit in terms of expo floor bravado, it still offers 3

days of education programming across 4 summits, 68 sessions and over 100 speakers from a wide variety of CSPs. In past events, there has been a concerted effort to play up the "Americas" component of the event, drawing in speakers from Chile, Argentina, Brazil, etc., but the attendance is still decidedly North American in nature. However, the event has moved back into November, getting in before the Holidays in the States, which is a good idea, in our opinion. Moreover, the Forum's Catalyst presentations continue to be of interest, as they provide a glimpse at communications IT problems being solved in a controlled environment by a diverse set of firms working in conjunction and producing tangible results. It's as hands-on as our industry gets in public.

GSMA Mobile Asia Congress

November 18-19

Hong Kong, China

In addition to the truly staggering Mobile World Congress, GSMA is trying to develop a strong foothold in regional events like this one. Show promoters expect the event to double in attendance this year, expanding to 3,500 attendees. While that number can't hold a candle to the Barcelona show, that growth rate is truly impressive. Furthermore, the keynote speaker lineup includes Wang Jianzhou, CEO

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of China Mobile; Lu Yimin, President of China Unicom; Ryuji Yamada, CEO of NTT DoCoMo; and Jamal Ibrahim, CEO of Axiata. Those are four of the top-25 mobile providers in the world, representing the better part of a billion subs between them. That's a great deal of experience.

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