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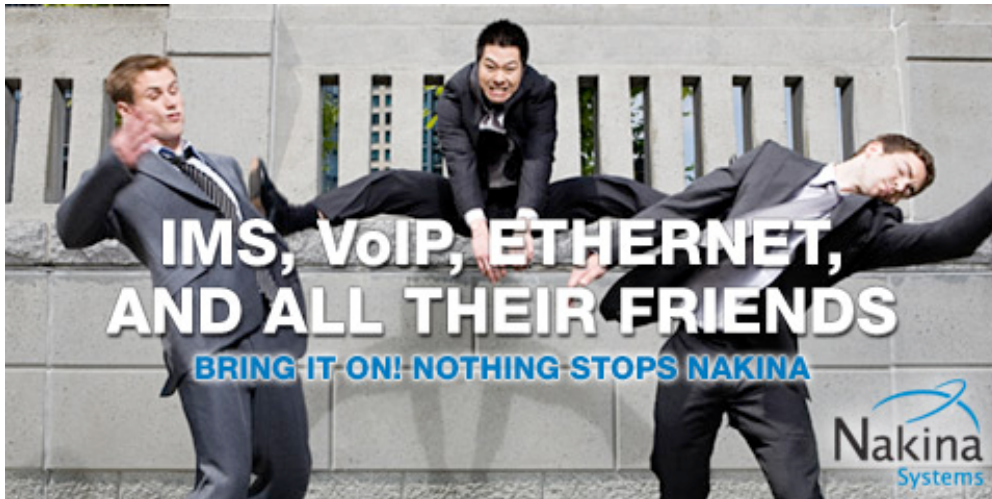
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Management World Americas 2009

By Tim Young

As I write this, the TM Forum's Management World Americas event is just a few weeks away from getting underway (and, indeed, may be in progress by the time you read this). Though very much the Forum's "junior" event, after its flagship show in Nice, Management World-Americas will be an interesting event to watch unfold. Last year's numbers were a step down from the show's heyday in Dallas and elsewhere, but in an era in which the trade show is being buffered by the economy, the Forum's events retain a level of cachet that few in the segment can match.

We wanted to take a moment to look at some of the highlights those of you who plan on attending the show can expect.



Keynotes

The event has an interesting slate of keynotes planned, based around the overall conference theme, which is "Surviving to Thriving: New Business Models, New Services, New Profits." Neil Cox, Executive VP from Qwest, will tackle that issue directly, and Fari Ebrahimi, SVP & CIO from Verizon Service Operations, will take on the issue of revenue generation and cost-cutting in his address on "Driving the Bottom Line".

The keynote lineup also directly reflects the shifting business models we're all seeing, everyday. In addition to speakers from communications service providers, the lineup includes Lucy Hood,

Executive Director, CTM, & former President Fox Mobile Entertainment, who will be speaking on the power associated with digital content. In addition, Jim Donio, President of the National Association of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) will be addressing the new challenges and opportunities around Digital Media.

While these speakers embody the outreach that the Forum has done in the past few years to incorporate thought leadership from across the value chain, one speaker especially epitomizes the growth and change of the Forum. Tom Lam, Advisor to the Secretary of Defense on NetOps, OASD (NII) US Department of Defense (DoD) CIO, will be speaking on Network Assurance for the Global Information Grid. Defense has been a growing part of the TM Forum's events, with a notable defense presence beginning to emerge at last year's Management World-Americas.

Back in the more traditional CSP realm, there are a number of interesting panel discussions taking place including some noted thought leaders in the industry.



Albert Hitchcock and Ricardo Santoro (CIO's of Vodafone Group and Claro Brasil, respectively) will come together to talk about the future of mobile communications. Given the wide scope of opportunities for growth in the mobile market, from increase breadth of coverage through prepaid, low-cost service, to expanded depth of coverage with emerging 4G and increasingly-ubiquitous mobile data, there's no shortage of possible discussion topics there.

In addition, Roberto Nobile (COO, Cablevision Argentina), Tom Vari (CIO & SVP, Application Delivery, Rogers Communications), and Rodrigo Duclos (CTO, Net Serviços) will discuss the future of the cable industry.

Regulation will be on the tips of many of the tongues at Management World Americas, and the ever-growing consciousness about regulation will be reflected in a panel, featuring Frontier Communications CIO Steve Ward and Attorney Paul Feldman, of Fletcher, Heald, and Hildreth, PLC. Their panel, entitled "Hype vs. Reality: What is the Role of Regulation in Delivering a 21st Century Digital World?" is sure to be informative.

On a personal note, I'm fortunate enough to have been asked to serve as Master of Ceremonies for the keynote session, so I look forward to seeing all of these speakers, as well as any of you who attend the event, in person (a rare treat in this digital age of ours).

Other Notable Sights

In addition to the formidable keynote lineup, Management World Americas (just as the Nice event in the spring/summer) offers something that few events in the space can: Bona fide, multi-vendor, concept-driven demonstrations.

The Catalyst projects, in the words of the Forum, "leverage leading edge IT concepts and couple them with TM Forum Best Practices and Standards to create real, deployable answers to real, bottom-line challenges." That's this event's real differentiator, in my opinion. The focus on and agreement in the existence of real, bottom-line challenges. It seems elementary, but many events have gotten away from such practical matters as demonstrably meeting legitimate business challenges.

There are five Catalysts being demonstrated at the event, and each one takes place in a different "zone" of the Forum's demonstration area, dubbed Forumville. The zones, and their catalysts, are as follows.

- "Cloud Initiative", focusing on the exciting world of cloud computing. The catalyst being explored in this area is "Service Model Catalyst-- Getting Telecom to Cloud 9".
- "Service Oriented Transformation", centered around time-honored TM Forum best practices, like NGOSS and eTOM. Catalyst Project: "New Generation Data Migration – A Key Enabler for Business Transformation".
- "Defense and Government", focusing on the emerging area of TM Forum Focus I mentioned previously. Catalyst Project: "Collaborated E2E Operation and Service Management -- Policy-based Management System Network Interoperability."
- "Customer Experience and Revenue Management", which focuses on that ever-important element of the communications picture: The person paying the bill and using the service. Catalyst Project: "Harmony Phase 5 -- Harmonizing the Standards to Manage Customer Experience".
- "Content and Advertising", which gets at a topic that's at the heart of most discussions about new CSP business models. Catalyst: "Mobile Content and Advertising Revenue Management -- Empowering Partnerships - Maximizing Revenue!"

All of these projects are sure to provide some excellent information and demonstration to participants from CSPs and vendor companies, alike.

Going?

The Management World Americas event will be taking place December 8-10, 2009. If you're reading this on the 7th, there may still be time to head down to Orlando to join the rest of the participants. For our part, we're eager to see how this year's event pans out. If it lives up to expectations, in this economy, it's got a bright future of continued utility. If not, it will join the ranks of events that have fallen victim to shifting business models and tighter pursestrings.

Time will tell.