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### **Technology Channel Association Holds First Ever Channel Chief Summit**

On April 13, 2010, the Technology Channel Association (TCA) hosted the first annual Channel Chief Summit in Chicago, Illinois. The meeting included thought leaders and major players in the indirect channel who are committed to improving the quality and reputation of the indirect sales channel community.

Overall, participants recognized the value of the indirect channel as an extension of the carrier direct sales teams with a strong commitment to smart growth because direct teams cannot cover the full extent of the marketplace. The Channel Chiefs in attendance confirmed that a lower indirect channel churn rate maintains a solid advantage over direct sales teams due to better relationship building over multiple years. The value of lower churn is clearly recognized as a huge value to the indirect channel.

According to a representative from Qwest, a premiere vendor member of TCA, strengthening the industry will be an ongoing process. "Qwest is proud to be a member of TCA and to serve on its vendor advisory board. The opportunity to interact with a talented group of leaders from the industry will assist us all in strengthening the role of the channel in carrier and technology sales. I look forward to continuing the work we began in Chicago," said Dale Tucker, Senior Director of Business Development, Qwest Business Partner Program.

Other vendor member participants, such as Level 3 Communications and NetWolves, found the Summit provided a much-needed forum. "We believe a group like TCA is essential to the industry. In the high tech channel arena, there are many Boards like TCA that further the cause of indirect channel issues and create standards that those partners can live by and also demonstrate higher value to their customers. By offering a forum for certification standards and a platform for advocating on behalf of telecom industry carriers and agent partners alike, TCA provides a very solid value. We are pleased to be on the TCA Advisory board," said Craig Schlagbaum, Vice President, Indirect Channels, Business Markets Group, Level 3 Communications.

"The discussion points were very constructive and informative. Being a provider who represents all of the carriers, our situation is quite different than the other vendors that were there. It was nice to hear their thoughts," said Ryan A. Kelly, President, Channel Program, NetWolves.

For XO Communications, the Summit gave their new channel leader direct access to agent feedback. "As the new channel leader for XO, it was great spending time with the TCA Board members as well as several of my peers across the industry. One thing was certain—our common goal is to make the channel the best that it can be in all facets of doing business. At XO, we believe in practicing good ethics at all costs which perfectly aligns with the goals of TCA. I look forward to collaborating further to make sure we drive that same philosophy across all members of our channel, assuring that we continue to

build something that is focused on long-term sustainability,” said Brian Law, National Vice President, Partner Channel Services, XO Communications.

The TCA Board of Trustees continues to actively recruit additional vendor and agent members to continue to raise the level of professionalism within the indirect sales channel.

“One of the take-aways from the Summit is that carriers are looking for an industry shift to a more professional agent community. TCA plans to carry that torch with a Certification program,” said Peter Radizeski, CEO of RAD-INFO and a TCA Board member.

“The participation and commitment from our TCA vendor members is inspiring. The indirect channel has a very impressive team of top managers who are committed to improving the quality and reputation of the channel. The TCA initiatives such as the Code of Ethics, Agent Certification, and Training were all strongly supported,” Jack Knocke, COO of MicroCorp, Inc. and TCA Board member.

“Much like TCA’s success as a true trade association, this Channel Chief Summit’s ultimate success will come down to inclusivity versus exclusivity. As more of the industry’s players continue to embrace our mission, the better our chances of making an industry wide impact,” said Dany Bouchédid, CEO of COLOTRAQ and TCA’s President.

“Any vendors that are serious about furthering a Channel Program in Telecom should be represented in TCA. The Channel Chief Summit is one of many benefits vendor sponsors derive from participation with TCA. I know of no better way to build relationships with top executives from other vendors and principals of National Master agents and learn best practices than through the TCA Channel Chief meeting. I would expect the next meeting to be much larger,” said Geoffrey Shepstone, President of Telecom Brokerage Inc. (TBI) and the Vice President of TCA.

“It is truly a great thing to finally see the first non-profit association in the telecom industry not just officially exist but also to fly high. This is going to allow all of us, vendor and agent members alike, to ‘raise the ocean’ to create more business for all in the industry. It will also enable us to scale this business growth with structure, efficiency and the best practices from such a great pool of member involvement. The Channel Chief Summit was the culmination of tremendous volunteer efforts of TCA as well as our vendor members,” said Vince Bradley, President and CEO of World Telecom Group and the TCA Chair of Vendor members.

The following vendor channel leaders attended the Summit: Alex Castaneda of Motorola, Jeff Fraser of Salestream, Tom Gorey of XO Communications, Chad Hohendorf of U.S. Signal, Michael Jerich of Global Crossing, Ryan Kelly of NetWolves, Jo Ann Kendricken of Intercall, Brian Law of XO Communications, Craig Schlagbaum of Level 3 and Dale Tucker of Qwest.

The following TCA Board members attended the Summit: Dany Bouchédid of COLOTRAQ, Vince Bradley of World Telecom Group, Ben Henkels of Communication Management Partners, Ian Kieninger of Avant Communications, Jack Knocke of MicroCorp, Peter Radizeski of RAD-INFO, Geoff Shepstone of TBI and Emmet Tydings of AB&T Telecom. Jim Swoyer of Swoyer Technologies attended as a guest.

For information on joining TCA, call (609) 799-4900 or email [info@tcasite.org](mailto:info@tcasite.org).

**About the Technology Channel Association (TCA)**

The Technology Channel Association (TCA) is the first-ever non-profit trade association for the indirect telecommunications sales channel. Their mission is to promote the growth and success of the indirect sales channel by addressing industry challenges, delivering value-added programs and services to meet the needs of agents and vendors alike and to identify and develop industry-wide best practices to empower individual businesses. More information about the association is available at [www.tcasite.org](http://www.tcasite.org).