

Agent Association Adds Board Members, Programs

The Technology Channel Association (TCA), a nonprofit organization for the indirect telecom sales channel, announced the addition of three new board members for the 2009-2011 term, as well as new member programs.

Telecom agents Ben Henkels, Emmet Tydings and Dave Wallace will aid in the development and planning of TCA programs, member recruitment and other initiatives. Henkels is principal and founder of Communication Management Partners, a telecom brokerage, consulting and managed IT services business. Tydings is president of AB&T Telecom, a master agency offering telecom, IT and field tech services to small, medium and large businesses and government customers. Wallace is president of Aligned Communications, a master agency focusing on telecom services for small and medium businesses.

TCA also announced new educational programs and networking opportunities now available to members. The association is hosting virtual member educational programming every month. In addition, members can participate in a series of calls on Channel Manager Best Practices. The association also is planning to conduct a market research project which will help to quantify the value of the indirect channel. +

Nortel Enterprise Unit Set for Auction

Two bankruptcy courts gave Nortel Networks Corp. permission to sell its enterprise business at a Sept. 11 auction.

A judge in the United States and another in Canada approved the auction's rules. Avaya Inc. will make the opening bid of \$475 million. Siemens is expected to vie for the unit as well, although it has not said how much it's willing to pay. All bids must be submitted by noon on Sept. 4.

Nortel's enterprise division makes up more than one-fifth of the company's overall revenue. But sales fell 41 percent in the first quarter of 2009. Avaya hopes to turn those numbers around, although some observers doubt its ability to do so, given the struggles it's encountered even after going private.

Nonetheless, Avaya remains optimistic. And it's covered its potential losses by requiring a break-up fee of \$14.25 million if it doesn't win next month's auction. The results must get the thumbs-up from the courts; a hearing on the Sept. 11 event is set for Sept. 15, at which time the winner will be solidified. +

newsbriefs

► The Senate in late July unanimously approved the nominations of Mignon Clyburn and Meredith Attwell Baker to the **Federal Communications Commission**, returning the panel to its full complement of five members. Clyburn, a Democrat, replaces Jonathan Adelstein, who now heads the Rural Utilities Service; Baker, a Republican and former National Telecommunications and Information Administration bigwig takes the seat Deborah Tate vacated in January. The panel also includes FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski and Michael Copps, both Democrats, as well as Robert McDowell, a Republican.

► **Sprint Nextel Corp.** announced July 28 it is buying prepaid mobile services provider **Virgin Mobile USA** in an all-stock deal valued at \$483 million, or \$5.50 per share. Meanwhile, if Virgin Mobile accepts a superior offer or otherwise backs out of the merger, it must pay Sprint a \$14.2 million cancellation fee. Otherwise, Sprint will take on all of Virgin Mobile USA — it already owns 13.1 percent of the MVNO — and retire up to \$205 million in its new subsidiary's debt.

► **Telephere Networks** said it will acquire Denver-based **Unity Business Networks** for an undisclosed sum. The deal marks the first acquisition for the hosted IP telephony provider, which recently landed an additional \$15 million in venture funding.

► **PanTerra Networks**, a hosted UC provider, added the Associate Sales Executive (ASE) referral program, which allows partners to refer opportunities to PanTerra and does not have any volume commitments and pays a one-time commission per seat.

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