MWC Americas Preview

By: Susana Schwartz

GSMA and CTIA believe North America has become the 'epicenter of mobile innovation,' and digital-ecosystem stakeholders from around the world will converge on San Francisco in a few weeks to talk about how to connect, collaborate and monetize digitally driven, mobile-forward services. Below, Susana Schwartz, managing editor of Pipeline, discusses with Reed Peterson, head of GSMA's Mobile World Congress Americas, the reasons why 'now' is the perfect time for a large-scale Americas event and what keynotes and conference topics to consider, as well as a roundup of some exhibitors' showcases at the event.

North America has not been a welcoming host to telecom-specific events focused on digital revolution, as evidenced by the fate of previous North American shows — Billing and OSS World, Management World Americas, 4G World, NXTcomm, Supercomm, GlobalComm and others. Though there were myriad reasons for the failures of past events in North America, the most glaring was a loss of interest in telco-selling-to-telco type shows that were innately biased in the ways they closely tied content to those capable of bolstering their bottomlines.

"There was a void and pent-up demand amid our members for a quality event in the Americas. CxOs from U.S. operator members, such as Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and U.S. Cellular have been wanting a home-based event focused on the entire mobile ecosystem so that they can tie into digitally focused, mobile-forward brands such as UnderArmour, Coke, GM, GE, Nike; and leading media and entertainment companies such as NBCUniversal, Comcast, ESPN, Disney, Turner Broadcasting; not to mention venture capitalists (VCs) handset manufacturers and regulatory officials," says Reed Peterson, head of GSMA's MWC Americas, noting that the amount of energy and innovation around mobile and digital in the West Coast could no longer be ignored.

Indeed, the last 10 years have seen North America rise in the mobile industry in terms of hardware, access technologies, operating systems and new apps and services. When one considers Facebook, Google, Apple, Amazon, Airbnb, Snap, and other California-based companies that have taken the lead in terms of the business models now driving the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it's easy to see why San Francisco should become a draw for stakeholders globally.

When asked about their participation at MWC Americas, Glenn Gibson, VP Marketing at Sigma

Systems said, "We are excited to be participating in the first MWC Americas event, where mobile operators, solution vendors and thought leaders will come together to discuss the biggest issues facing the industry today. We look forward to meeting with operators at the event to discuss their path to digital transformation."

According to CTIA and GSMA organizers, one of the big differentiators for GSMA North America will be the push to ensure the content in the conferences and in the keynotes focuses on the specific needs of players throughout the ecosystem — who needs to work with whom in order to accelerate the speed and efficiency with which services can be developed, delivered, and monetized. "Rather than company leaders standing on stage saying 'look how cool we are' the sessions and keynotes address very specific challenges with an eye toward the esoteric needs of all in the value chain," contends Reed.

The keynote list is diverse and expanding even as the show approaches featuring international business magnate Carlos Slim and CEOs from América Móvil, AT&T, Pandorabots, Nokia, Bharti Enterprises, Unity, Sprint, Paypal, and Mighty Networks; the CIO from UPS and executive vice president from Verizon Wireless, as well as the Chairman of the FCC, among others.

Beyond the keynote heavyweights, the conference sessions will also span a diverse landscape of topics directed at all in the value chain, including: 'women4tech,' policy, content strategies, AI, 5G, AR, VR in entertainment, digital education and sustainability, technology and climate change, FCC regulatory issues, net neutrality, smart cities, video and entertainment in 5G, technology and climate change, drones, among many others.

Representing the rich tapestry of players in the digital landscape, there will be more than 1,000 exhibitors on the show floor. We asked some of the exhibiting companies with which *Pipeline* regularly works to tell us what they will be showcasing to give you a taste of what can see at MWC Americas:

SIGMA

Sigma Systems, a leading provider of catalog-driven agile B/OSS, will be exhibiting in the **Ontario Canada Pavilion S1016**. Sigma will demonstrate how it helps traditional operators transform into Digital Service Providers capable of rapidly launching and fulfilling new products and services through the adoption of agile B/OSS, which can exist as an overlay to the legacy environment. Sigma will showcase its solutions for digital transformation including Sigma Catalog (enterprise-wide catalog), Configure Price Quote, Order Management, Provisioning, and the recently launched Sigma Insights — a product for intelligent data mining and analytics that provides meaningful insights into the commercial and technical performance of the business. Sigma can discuss why catalog-driven agile B/OSS is the fastest path to creating, selling and delivering digital products and services, as well as the future for communications providers seeking to become market-leading digital service providers. You can schedule an appointment with Sigma Systems at MWC Americas, by **clicking here**.

Intraway

For mobile service providers looking to decrease their time to market, increase operational cash flow and significantly reduce new service deployment complexities, Intraway's **booth S1515** at Mobile World Congress will be showcasing their solution, Symphonica Mobile Service Activator, an orchestration and service activation platform that facilitates activating core and value-added mobile services very quickly. By replacing multiple service provisioning systems with a single real-time, fully automated lifecycle service orchestrator that has the fastest service integration time on the market, Symphonica helps provide dynamic responses to meet mobile needs.

In a case study published by TM Forum Inform, results show that a mobile provider using Intraway's Symphonica Mobile Service Activator achieved astounding results, including:

- activation errors fell by more than 50%
- subscriber complaints plunged to below 20% and recurring calls to 50%
- provisioning errors dropped by 60%
- operational support costs were greatly reduced
- new services to market 3x faster than previous average time.

Managing over 55 million devices deployed in 22 countries over three continents, Intraway's solutions have helped improve communications service providers' profitability, time-to-market and customer experience since 2003. In other words, they unleash the full potential of networks by adding the latest, cutting-edge functionalities while reducing operational costs. Operators seeking a trustworthy partner with proven success in the industry can visit Intraway's booth S1515 to discuss the benefits of adding an orchestration layer to a mobile network. To schedule a meeting at MWC or to learn more about Intraway and their solutions, please email [Ramon Lopez](#) or visit their website www.intraway.com.

CSG International

CSG will demonstrate its Ascendon cloud-based digital services platform, which enables CSPs, content producers and retailers to launch, scale, and monetize new digital services such as movies, music, games, and more. Purposefully built as a unified suite, Ascendon integrates the full scope of business operations — from product creation and sales offers, to order and activation, to revenue management and partner settlement. Ascendon is delivered through flexible delivery models, including cloud and managed services and is the first platform of its kind to be available on the Amazon Web Services (AWS) public cloud. Requiring no investment in new infrastructure, and offering virtually limitless scalability, Ascendon enables service providers to fulfill digital services that consumers are demanding now and in the future.

Dali Wireless

Dali Wireless will exhibit its cellular and public safety digital DAS and virtual fronthaul solutions. Dali designs and manufactures innovative wireless solutions using patented technology that eliminates interference, maximizes spectrum usage, and enables RAN virtualization for 5G and IoT. Dali Matrix® is a compact, next generation digital platform that provides intelligent signal routing and coverage for cellular, public safety and Wi-Fi, over one single transport infrastructure. This 10Gbps solution supports multiple mobile operators, transport technologies, base station vendors, and global frequency bands. The Dali Matrix® virtual Fronthaul Interface makes the Dali Matrix® platform '5G ready'. This 100 percent digital interface unit intelligently constructs a logical multipoint-to-multipoint network between vBS or vBBUs and remote radio units to effectively virtualize spectrum, enabling it to be pooled, shared, and managed – negating the need for overprovisioning.

Ingenu

Ingenu delivers purpose-built IoT connectivity, and will be exhibiting various RPMA-connected devices. Ingenu is building the world's largest IoT network dedicated low-power, wide-area (LPWA) connectivity for machines. Operating on universal spectrum, the company's RPMA® technology is a proven standard for connecting IoT devices across the globe. Ingenu's technology uniquely achieves the connectivity cost for many billions of devices, providing valuable intelligence for businesses.

Microsoft

Microsoft will demonstrate its mission to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. Come see how Microsoft's enterprise-class platforms and solutions come together within a rich partner ecosystem, helping to support the mission-critical operations of

today's CSPs. Chris Pendleton, principal PM Manager, Azure IoT, will participate in a panel on how IoT and the connected vehicle will transform our home and work lives. And, Jenny Lay-Flurrie, chief accessibility officer at Microsoft will take part in the M-Enabling Forum along with Rick Lievano, worldwide director of industry technology strategy, telecommunications industry, who will speak on the Mobile Enabled Solutions for Inclusive Smart Cities panel.

Mimosa Networks

Mimosa will demo 5G Fixed solutions including the MicroPoP (suburban) and GigaPoP (rural), with an emphasis on the cutting-edge Spectrum Reuse Synchronization (SRS) software. The traditional MicroPoP consists of point-to-multipoint products, where access points reside on telephone poles, or something similar, in order to reach homes. The GigaPoP relies on access points placed on towers and clients with longer-distance capabilities, as homes are more spread out in rural areas. SRS fits into these solutions by allowing base stations to smartly reuse channels across the network, solving the high-density fixed wireless challenge. This means less spectrum is needed to deliver 5G Fixed solutions, as well as faster speeds for the subscriber.

Mobileum

Mobileum will showcase an Active Intelligence Platform for innovative analytics across roaming, fraud and revenue assurance, security, and digital services. The company will show why its rich heritage in roaming services translates into domain expertise in billing, policy and charging, fraud and security, as well as signaling across SS7 and IP protocols. That telco expertise combined with real-time analytic capabilities in machine learning and behavioral analytics support solutions in roaming, counter-fraud and security, and customer engagement.

MulteFire Alliance

At MWC Americas, the MulteFire Alliance will demonstrate MulteFire, an LTE-based technology that operates standalone in unlicensed or shared spectrum, allowing anyone to deploy and operate their own private LTE network. Based on 3GPP Release 13 and 14, the MulteFire Release 1.0 specification is available for public download. Member companies Athonet, Nokia, Qualcomm and Sanjole will showcase MulteFire in action, highlighting initial applications for enterprise and industrial IoT.

Nokia

Nokia will showcase how it is creating the technology to connect the world. See how the digital world is evolving, and how Nokia is transforming technologies and businesses through the acceleration of the Internet of Things, 5G, cloud, digital health, and virtual reality. Customers will immerse themselves in the industry's broadest portfolio and services expertise that brings people and experiences closer together and enables them to differentiate and build their businesses. Nokia also has an impressive lineup of speakers for the inaugural event, including President and CEO Rajeev Suri delivering a keynote on the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Other Nokia executives will be presenting on a variety of topics, including: Women Empowering Technology Equality; Smart Cities; The 5G Ecosystem; The Role of Technology in the Fight Against Climate Change; Enhancing Fan Engagement via the Connected Stadium; and IoT Connectivity.

Radisys

Radisys will show different business use cases running on a common data center platform, OCP-CG-19-based DCEngine open hardware, which enables (CSPs) to optimize resources in a CORD environment. The extensible RAN (xRAN) use case allows CSPs to optimize scarce RAN over-the-

air resources leveraging real-time data analytics of network conditions. This software-based approach to RAN reduces complexity, OpEx and CapEx, while allowing CSPs to rapidly respond to user needs and roll out new services. This demo aims at providing a common controller for both RAN and packet core resources. The Hybrid-CORD use case proves demonstrates CORD platforms providing convergence to the access technology, enabling CSPs to leverage the same data center for both wireline (OLT) and wireless (RAN) access. CSPs can thereby deliver better QoE to subscribers with one open architecture, while bringing cloud data center economics and agility to the Central Office.

MWC Americas: Anticipations

What do these and other exhibitors expect at MWC Americas? A North America-focused opportunity for new business opportunities domestically and abroad: "The timing of this show is perfect because of the rapid dynamics in the American market. Our operator customers now more than ever want to discover new revenue streams and create new opportunities for themselves and for their customers," says James Doyle of Mobileum. He believes competition from OTT competitors is "motivating telco leaders to collaborate with all industries to accelerate change, and to compete and win in the evolving digital landscape."

Doyle, like those representing other exhibitors, believes GSMA is primed to succeed. "As an organization, they consistently have proven unrivaled networking opportunities, as well as a diverse and progressive exhibitor list that offers attendees a wider viewpoint on the state of the industry, as compared to other events," adds Doyle.

Sigma Systems is excited to be participating in the first MWC Americas event, where mobile operators, solution vendors and thought leaders will come together to discuss the biggest issues facing the industry today," added Glenn Gibson, vice president of marketing, Sigma Systems. "We look forward to helping CSPs at the event see how they can rapidly productize and deliver new products and services with product-centric — rather than network-focused — approaches, as well as to discuss how catalog-driven approach to B/OSS can be the clearest path to digital transformation."

GSMA and CTIA say the Americas show is tracking toward 30,000 attendees, with 200+ "quality press" attending as well. Perhaps the show will be able to ride off its momentum from its Barcelona event, which this year saw 110,000 attendees, and its Shanghai event, which this year saw 67,000.

Time will tell whether Reed's prediction that this "could be the largest gathering of mobile leadership ever in the same place" proves too ambitious a portent for an inaugural show, but regardless of the numbers, he believes the real story will be what CxOs from leading operators accomplish in the many meetings arranged among delegations and stakeholders from all industries and geographies: "It's what comes out of those board meetings, committees and strategy meetings in San Francisco that could translate into a real differentiator for us in North America," believes Reed.

With so much taking place, *Pipeline* will report back next month with post-show coverage of the event, and what exhibitors and attendees report about their time in San Francisco, and whether or not it lived up to their expectations.