

## Letter from the Editor - Network Transformation

By: Scott St. John

There is something unique about transformation that distinguishes it from simple change. To change, only one part of a system has to become different. Transformation, on the other hand, is steeped in the specific purpose of reinventing the system itself.



Natural transformation occurs as a system—over time—eventually evolves into something new. But to intentionally transform is much more difficult. To intentionally transform, one must possess clarity, purpose and vision. One has to have a clearly defined image of what is and what one wants it to become. Then, they must design and execute a detailed strategy of how it is to occur.

There are a number of examples within our industry to illustrate this point. The move from voice to VoIP was evolutionary, as was the evolution from 3G to 4G mobile connectivity. In fact, both are still occurring. I would argue further that neither example was done with a specific intent to holistically transform, but rather with the intent to simply change in the hope of surviving. At the same time, companies such as Amazon, Facebook, Skype and Uber—we have all heard the list spouted countless times—set out to reinvent an existing system, and in some cases entire industries. But *that's* transformation.

There is a certain finality to transformation. The caterpillar is no longer a caterpillar; it is now a butterfly. You no longer go to the mall, you just log into Amazon Prime. You don't hail a taxi, you simply get an Uber with few taps on your smartphone. So, how does all this relate to the theme of this month's issue of *Pipeline*? I'm glad you asked.

This month, we take a look at the topic of network transformation and the very definition of what networks have become. Historically, networks were pieces of equipment linked by physical connections. Cables and switchboards eventually morphed into soft switches and Ethernet cables. Today, a network can be virtually anything, if you pardon the pun. Networks can be physical, wireless, virtual, or any combination of these. They can be located on overhead poles, underground, under the sea, in outer space, in the cloud, on many pieces of equipment, just one, or even on a chip.

In addition, the industry is now standing upon the threshold of transformation. Many of these topics we've covered and will continue to cover throughout the year within the issues of *Pipeline*. But, the advent and adoptions of these new technologies—such as 5G, IoT, cloud, software-defined networking, AI, and many others—stand to change everything. And it all begins with the network, and the clarity, purpose, vision, intent, and plan to transform.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we explore network transformation from multiple angles to help you with your transformation strategy. FiberLight shows us how [dark fiber is being used to transform enterprises](#). Unitas Global walks us down [the path to cloud transformation](#). EdgeConneX talk to us about [rearchitcting the internet](#) to contend with the new digital economy. Connected2Fiber shows us how to use [location intelligence as the foundation for digital transformation](#). Ribbon Communications tells us how [Communication Platforms as a Service \(CPaaS\)](#) can be an opportunity for service providers. Global Convergence Solutions (GCS) share what [network transformation means in 2020](#) and beyond; and Bandwidth provides insights to help you prepare for [new 911 regulations](#) that go into effect this year. All this, plus a digest

of the [latest industry news](#) and [more](#).

As always we hope you enjoy this and every issue of *Pipeline*,

**Scott St. John**

Managing Editor

*Pipeline*

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