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What you missed at DTW Ignite 2025

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The TM Forum's DTW Ignite! (DTW) found itself once again in the happiest city on earth, Copenhagen, situated in the peaceful country of Denmark. Compared to prior years, the Bella Center had taken on a new identity. DTW's main stage, which hosted the opening keynotes, now found itself in the center of the event in a more open format, allowing for a better, more relaxed, and accessible experience. All main stages utilized this model, allowing for a quick, embarrassment-free exit if all the Artificial Intelligence (AI) hype became too much to bear.

The event venue was wonderfully appointed, allowing for a mental escape from all things tech and artificial. Large trees, plants and foliage filled the Park Stage and Garden (see Figure 1, on next page) areas. Thanks to a glass ceiling, the Park area was illuminated by natural light, absolving the stuffy claustrophobia that can sometimes accompany other trade shows. However, while the natural environment provided a calming respite from the hustle and bustle of the event, some of the vegetation must have been real, as people appeared to be suffering from indoor hay fever.



Despite the show being located in a suburban corporate playground of swanky hotels, the convention centre, and a golf course, travel into the city centre was 30 minutes away. Copenhagen is well worth the visit, with amenities galore, incredible food and arguably the kindest people in all of Europe. The city is also incredibly clean, energy-conscious, and feels very safe, especially with the streets being filled with sunshine for so long during the summer.

Previous DTW events were hosted in the fall, meaning jet black cold evenings following a long day at the event, making the motivation to explore Copenhagen a somewhat difficult task whilst being located on the outskirts of the city. Andrew Coward, GM of Software Networking at IBM, remarked upon this, saying that the event would have been better if it were located in the city center, as it was in previous years in Nice, France. TM Forum made a great decision to host the event in June this year, though, taking full advantage of Copenhagen's epic long days, which stay light from four o'clock in the morning to eleven o'clock at night.

The event was blessed with exceptional weather, which brought with it the hazards of being blinded by light. Depending on where you sat, you had to maximize your screen brightness just to see it. The Media Village had now been moved from the previous year's air-conditioned halls to this area, so there were a lot of overheated journalists frantically typing away under the baking Danish sun. Thankfully, this was mitigated to some extent by a never-ending supply of Coca-Cola served by pleasant TM Forum staff.



Figure 1 - TM Forum's DTW Ignite! 2025 Park Stage and Garden Area
[click to enlarge](#)

Nik Willits, CEO of TM Forum, opened with a Keynote (see Figure 2, next page), referring to the 'code red' he had cautioned the industry during the keynote of DTW 2023. His nod to the previous DTW referred to the industry's vulnerability as it must keep up with an ever-evolving landscape whilst being weighed down by decades of legacy technology. But the vibe shifted to a positive note as Willits went on to share his sentiment that the telecoms industry is seizing upon the AI opportunity and delivering upon the promise of transformation, "we're not just talking about autonomous networks, we're building them," he stated with gusto. He was also proud to share that the industry is getting over the code red announced two years ago by providing autonomous networks level 4 certification.

Willits then sat down with Anish Shah and Kiran Thomas, Jio's COO and CEO, respectively. Thomas proudly stated that 'API is the new KPI' as the industry moves towards greater interoperability. This session also underscored the TM Forum's international collaboration, particularly in India, and this was also supported by the mix of companies exhibiting in the halls, making for a more refreshingly diverse event.

Ulf Ewaldsson stole the show for T-Mobile with an all-American high-octane video followed by a high-energy speech that hyped up the crowd. The video footage showed how T-Mobile's networks were having a positive impact on many aspects of society, including their 5G-A-focused network slicing for first responders. Ulf stated that by 2030, "networks will no longer wait for prompts" and will take control of a problem before you even know it's there.

Willits also claimed in his opening Keynote that DTW's attendance was at an all-time high this year, seeming to indicate that it broke the DTW Ignite! 2024 mark of 3,895 event attendance. However, as of the writing of this article, there has been no official release of the actual, official attendance number. Overall, the event constantly maintained a feeling of spaciousness (see Figure 3, next page) without ever seeming dead, except for the Village area, which is to be expected as it's a place to attend pre-booked private meetings rather than host open exhibitions. Main keynotes were well attended, and catering this year was well organized with multiple tables featuring the same array of food, meaning almost zero queuing even during peak times.

Of course, it would be impossible to cover the event without mentioning AI, and with AI and autonomous networks making an appearance in the very first minute of the opening keynote. In our meetings with exhibitors, most vendors were beating the AI drum at one point or another. The overall AI input seemed mixed, with some applying AI to real-world use cases, and others still being more reserved. Vinutha Rao, principal presales consultant at Subex, told *Pipeline* that "generative AI-powered AI Agents are being used for investigation" in their new fraud management solution. Amongst all the hype, Liz Parry, CEO of Lifecycle Software, skeptically stated that she is only "interested in AI that actually adds value." However, it's *Pipeline's* opinion - based on other aspects of the event and covering real-world use cases for AI over the last decade - that AI has finally arrived and those who wait will miss out on the tremendous opportunity it provides, for automation, cost reduction, efficiency, and innovation.



Figure 2 - Opening Keynote at DTW Ignite! 2025
[click to enlarge](#)

The DTW sessions provided deep dives into how AI-ready, cloud-native frameworks, aligned with Open Digital Architecture, empower operators to implement zero-touch orchestration, faster innovation cycles, and cost efficiency. More than 130 speakers—including AWS, IBM, Microsoft, and NVIDIA—shared insights on using AI and data to drive operational efficiency, service innovation, and create smarter business models.

DTW showcased its Catalyst project area, where companies could spotlight their latest and greatest technology collaborations and innovations. Prianca Ravichander, CCO and CMO of Tecnotree, told *Pipeline*, “Catalysts are becoming stronger, it’s a better illustration of what you are doing here than just what you are showing at your booth.” There were some catchy titles on show, such as Comarch and its partner’s “Messy data in, treasure out: boosting Autonomous Networks’.” This Catalyst focused on using AI-powered data structuring and visualization to tame unstructured autonomous network data, with the ultimate goal being to ‘enable the network to heal itself’.

AWS, Cisco, Verizon and other big names partnered on the catalyst project “Game X” to meet the needs of the rapidly growing eSports industry by ‘combining standardized network APIs and AI orchestration to enable fixed-wireless convergence for ultra-low-latency cloud gaming and immersive applications’. The collaboration met the needs of bandwidth-hungry professional gamers by creating a network that automatically adapts to ensure a quality of experience that is required for high-level online gaming, such as tournaments.

One of the most visually satisfying events at the show was the Hackathon, tucked away in a modest corner in Hall C4 just in front of the Impact Stage. A couple of little booths and what could be some of the greatest minds in the industry were working away. Despite there not being much action, it was nice to see some of the actual talent that fuel events such as DTW and the industry as a whole and are behind industry innovation.

The cybersecurity elite were battling it out for prizes, including \$6000 of Google Cloud credits, three months of follow-up support from a Google mentor, a TM Forum article and more. Just taking part in the event gave entrants the opportunity to work with the latest version of Gemini 2.5 and the chance to take on some of the hardest telco-industry challenges.

As I made my way through the main exhibition halls known as The Quad, I was struck by the visual representations of marketing investments, including the domineering exhibits of tech giants. Google, Amdocs, Ericsson and Nokia flexed with some of the event’s biggest stands (and Nokia kept their tradition of putting their signature cafe at the hall’s entrance as well). Huawei was also a big player with a beefy stand, a modest departure from their entire hall that they rented out at the previous MWC in Barcelona. The Symphonica VIP Lounge overlooked the whole event from a mezzanine floor, offering a place of quiet solace from up high. Symphonica’s CEO, Leandro Rzezak, proudly shared that he was happy to be sponsoring the lounge this year and that ‘DTW to our industry is the most valuable trade

show’. He was also impressed by ‘interesting talks’ and like others shared the thought that ‘DTW has the right people and it’s easier to connect than MWC’.



Figure 3 - DTW Ignite! 2025 Show Floor
[Click to enlarge](#)

It was good to see some more visual props at this year’s DTW, making the show floor feel more alive. Ericsson’s stand was adorned with their playful slogan “OSS. BSS. NO BS.” which was also on a large banner located above the main entrance to the Bella Centre. Oracle ditched the Formula One car but replaced it with a more interactive and immersive driving simulator, which demonstrated how incredibly difficult Formula One driving is. Shirin Esfandiari, Senior Director Product Marketing at Oracle, shared more of Oracle’s palpable innovations by telling *Pipeline* about tech that will support first responders to keep the public and themselves safer in the line of duty. Esfandiari claimed that “Oracle are focused on real life uses cases” and went on to explain how their first responder monitoring solution, helps to protect users with a network of body cams that allows senior management to remotely take control of stressful and complex situations that may be beyond the scope and experience of staff on scene.

All in all, Copenhagen played a tremendous host to DTW once again this year. The 6 TM Forum did an outstanding job creating an open, airy, and accessible environment (see Figure 3) for those who attended. The general feel was spacious, and the feedback we received from exhibitors and sponsors was that it was well worth the investment, providing a more focused and collaborative environment for the telecommunications industry. While we feel the industry may be struggling to break away from its legacy roots, this event in particular is the place to be for those looking to do so.