

CableFAX Daily™

Friday — March 25, 2011

What the Industry Reads First

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Poop Scoop: Comcast Gets Out Vote, TWC Shows Off Logo, Poll Gets Load of Attention

We weren't sure how much attention the industry paid to the annual "Golden Poo" award, but we sure stepped in it Thurs. Comcast confirmed a claim Wed evening from The Consumerist that it was encouraging employees to vote for Charter as the worst company in Round 1 of the Website's "Worst Companies in America" poll. But the MSO said it was merely following the advice of the Consumerist, whose editor sent out a letter to companies in the running for this year's contest that said to "feel free to rally the troops and get them voting—for the competition, of course." "We respect the right of the Consumerist to hold their survey every year. And we also take to heart their message asking our employees to participate. We're proud of our ongoing efforts to improve the customer experience and coming together to send a strong message that we are a great company," said a Comcast spokesman, who added that the MSO has introduced more customer service initiatives and has seen a decline in repeat customer service calls in the past year. The Website, published by a non-profit subsidiary of **Consumers Union**, gave the top honor to Comcast last year after it defeated **Ticketmaster**. Losing to Charter in Round 1 would eliminate Comcast all together from the March Madness bracket-style competition. But it looks like the get-out-the-vote campaign may have backfired. At press time, Comcast had more than 84% of the votes cast, with the poll set to close at 9am Fri. There were some claims that Consumerist blocked votes from Comcast IP addresses. Calls to editor-in-chief *Meghann Marco* weren't returned by deadline. "Vote for Charter—Worst Companies in America" read the Comcast email obtained by **Cfax**. It stated that participation is voluntary, but encouraged employees to vote from multiple devices with unique IP addresses. "Since this may require the need to vote from home tonight, we are sending this message to only a select group of our management team," the email read. The email said it found suggesting a Charter vote "distasteful, but unfortunately, that is how the Consumerist chose to structure their event." We have to wonder if **Comcast Cable** pres *Neil Smit* was encouraged to vote against the people he led as CEO for nearly 5 years. As for Charter's response to the whole brouhaha, a spokesperson said listening to consumers is the most important thing the company does. "They tell us if we're not meeting their expectations, and what we need to do better. And recently, they've had some good things to say," the Charter rep said, pointing to **Forrester** data that corroborates what the MSO has been hearing. "Charter customers are experiencing improved service, and we're pleased they've noticed. That's what matters to



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us.” Plenty of multichannel providers are represented in the poll, now in its 6th year. Consumerist poked fun Thurs at **Time Warner Cable** after an employee reached out to note that the Website was using its old logo and sent an updated one, offering 2 color options. Asked about the incident, a TWC spokesman said, with tongue firmly planted in cheek, “Everybody gets 2 logo choices.” Time Warner Cable was pitted against **Facebook** in Round 1 of the March Madness style bracket and was voted worst (53% vs 47%). **DirectTV** beat out **DISH** in a Round 1 match-up, and **AT&T** with its proposed **T-Mobile** deal was poised to get the most votes against **Verizon**. Readers send in nominations for the Worst Company in America tourney, and Consumerist sets up a 32-company bracket that dwindles to a Final Four and championship match-up. Winning the whole contest this year would mean garnering more votes than oil-spilling **BP**, which handily won Round 1 with more than 90% of the vote against **Toyota**.

Broadband: *Bloomberg's* report claiming **Time Warner Cable** is exploring a partnership with **LightSquared** to provide mobile broadband services shouldn't come as a surprise. Though the MSO refused to comment, using LightSquared's 4G network would make sense, especially since TWC boss *Glenn Britt* has openly admitted his disappointment with the MSO's **Clearwire** tie-up. “We believe that TWC is likely just evaluating its options and this is not yet a done deal,” said **Wells Fargo Securities' Marci Ryvicker**, noting how an alliance could help promote the MSO's TV Everywhere product. At **CTIA Wireless Wed**, LightSquared CEO *Sanjiv Ahuja* said the company's satellite-powered mobile broadband network will cover 100mln Americans by the end of '12, 145mln a year later and 260mln by the end of '15. “We're not only committed to meeting these milestones, we are today well positioned to exceed them,” said Ahuja. LightSquared plans to spend \$14bln on its network over the next 8 years, and this week announced partnerships with **Leap Wireless** and **Best Buy**.

Overseeing Jules: **House Oversight** cmtte chmn *Darrell Issa* isn't satisfied with the **FCC** chmn's response to queries over possible White House involvement in the agency's net neutrality rulemaking, so he's trying to get answers once more. In a letter to *Julius Genachowski* Thurs, Issa warns that the committee may at “any time” investigate “any matter.” Based on White House provided info, Genachowski visited the White House 81 times—more than the Sec of Energy (11), Sec of Homeland Security (16), Sec of Defense (10), Sec of Treasury (23) and Sec of State (21) combined, wrote Issa. (Any chance old friends Obama and Genachowski were playing a game of hoops?) By COB Apr 6, Issa wants a log of all meetings between and among FCC staff and/or consultants and White House staffers; all documents between the 2 relating to net neutrality rules; and info previously requested in a Nov '09 letter. Issa sent 2 letters (Nov '09 and Dec '10) on the issue as ranking member. He claims that Genachowski's response that proper procedure was followed is inadequate.

Upfronts: **The Hub's** '11-'12 lineup will feature 9 new originals, including “Clue” and “The Game of Life,” based on the board games, reality series “Majors & Minors” (wt), in which 16 young performers are mentored by established music stars, and “Secret Millionaire's Club” featuring an animated *Warren Buffett* as a secret adviser to a group of kids who learn about business and how the world around them works. -- **Crown Media Nets** has replaced Hallmark Channels as the umbrella brand under which **Hallmark Channel** and **Hallmark Movie Channel** will operate. Hallmark's '11-'12 movie slate features 25 and appearances by stars including *Kim Delaney*, *Sir Roger Moore* and *Billy Ray Cyrus*, and Hallmark Movie, now in 40mln homes, has 8 of its own on tap. Hallmark also announced the 4Q addition of “Emeril's Table” to its Hallmark Channel Home lifestyle block that will again feature “The Martha Stewart Show” and “Petkeeping with *Marc Morrone*.”

Advertising/Marketing: **Adult Swim's** teaming with **Pizza Hut** for the “Fan-Made Contest,” which will ask fans to describe their favorite moment involving pizza via video submission. Fans will then vote on their favorite videos at www.adultswim.com/fanmade and the net will recreate the winning video in a custom Pizza Hut commercial to run this summer. -- After resigning as **Fox Nets** svp, affil marketing and local ad sales in Sept, *Todd Schoen* has opened **Schoen Marketing**, an L.A.-based agency specializing in B2B for programmers and distributors with an emphasis on distribution marketing.

Programming: **FX** won't bring back original “Lights Out” after its 1st season ends Apr 5.

Honors: **Comcast** CEO *Brian Roberts* on Jun 7 will receive the Fred Dressler Achievement Award at the Mirror Awards, sponsored by Syracuse Univ's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. **Foursquare** co-founders *Dennis Crowley* and *Naveen Selvadurai* will receive the i-3 award for impact, innovation and influence. -- **AETN** evp, CFO *Gerard Grusso* gets the **Media Financial Mgmt Assoc's** Distinguished CFO Award at the MFM/BCCA conference, May 15-17, Atlanta.

On The Circuit: The only time we know of when it's good to go downhill: the **US Adaptive Ski Team** and nearly 1K

BUSINESS & FINANCE

industry execs will gather Mar 31-Apr 3 in Vail, CO, for the 16th annual **SkITAM**. The event raises most of the team's funding. And *Paul Maxwell* moderates a TV Everywhere panel Mar 31 at 3pm. See skitam.com.
-- The Cable Show '11 will include a focus on the global transition to IPv6 through several panels.

People: *Charlie Bartolotta*, **Media-com** svp, enterprise solutions and field service ops, is retiring from the cable industry. He's spent 28 years in cable—more than 10 at Mediacom and was a division pres for **AT&T Broadband**. "Charlie's enthusiasm and expertise made him a major contributor to our company's success," said MCCC chmn/CEO *Rocco Commisso*. -- **Fuse** named *SocialVibe* co-founder *Joe Marchese* svp, digital & marketing strategy. -- **Nat Geo** elevated *Bridget Whalen Hunnicutt* to svp, global dev and *Charlie Parsons* to vp, global dev, and also opened a dev office in L.A. that *David Lyle* will lead on an interim basis.

Business/Finance: **Sanford Bernstein's** *Craig Moffett* upgraded **AT&T** to "outperform" and raised his price target by \$3 to \$31 on the telco's **T-Mobile USA** bid. "...our confidence in AT&T's regulatory team, and the consonance of this deal with the stated policy objectives of the current Administration, suggests that this deal has a real chance of approval," said Moffett. "If the deal closes, we estimate that it is worth more than \$5 per AT&T share."

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	03/24 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	03/24 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DIRECTV:	46.41	0.86	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.90	UNCH
DISH:	24.17	0.80	BROADCOM:	41.10	0.59
DISNEY:	42.86	0.62	CISCO:	17.36	(0.22)
GE:	19.78	0.25	CLEARWIRE:	5.34	(0.01)
NEWS CORP:	18.02	0.18	CONCURRENT:	6.20	0.13
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	34.86	0.33	CONVERGYS:	14.44	(0.06)
CHARTER:	49.88	1.05	CSG SYSTEMS:	19.30	0.13
COMCAST:	24.73	0.63	ECHOSTAR:	36.67	0.87
COMCAST SPCL:	23.23	0.58	GOOGLE:	586.89	4.73
GCI:	10.42	0.34	HARMONIC:	8.96	0.29
KNOWLOGY:	13.57	0.39	INTEL:	20.38	0.09
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	73.62	1.48	JDSU:	20.36	1.34
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	41.64	0.70	LEVEL 3:	1.42	0.02
LIBERTY INT:	15.69	0.01	MICROSOFT:	25.81	0.27
SHAW COMM:	20.91	(0.14)	RENTRAK:	26.84	(0.21)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	70.28	0.91	SEACHANGE:	9.41	(0.01)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	26.84	0.39	SONY:	32.38	0.23
WASH POST:	439.34	1.92	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.56	0.07
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	25.09	0.22	THOMAS & BETTS:	56.52	0.47
CROWN:	2.35	0.11	TIVO:	8.81	0.27
DISCOVERY:	39.56	(0.02)	TOLLGRADE:	10.07	0.06
GRUPO TELEVISA:	23.97	0.31	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	28.93	0.49
HSN:	31.02	0.02	VONAGE:	4.13	(0.07)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	30.00	0.32	YAHOO:	16.83	0.70
LIBERTY:	43.00	0.05	TELCONS		
LIBERTY STARZ:	78.16	(1.32)	AT&T:	28.54	0.40
LIONSGATE:	6.07	(0.02)	QWEST:	6.76	(0.04)
LODGENET:	3.68	0.05	VERIZON:	37.18	0.20
NEW FRONTIER:	1.87	0.02	MARKET INDICES		
OUTDOOR:	7.20	(0.23)	DOW:	12170.56	84.54
SCRIPPS INT:	50.66	0.14	NASDAQ:	2736.42	38.12
TIME WARNER:	35.63	0.05	S&P 500:	1309.66	12.12
VALUEVISION:	6.73	0.06			
VIACOM:	51.58	0.63			
WWE:	12.33	0.16			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADVANTAGE:	3.03	UNCH			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	5.33	0.19			
AMDOCS:	29.39	0.49			
AMPHENOL:	54.26	(0.31)			
AOL:	19.97	0.11			
APPLE:	344.97	5.78			
ARRIS GROUP:	12.29	0.17			
AVID TECH:	21.97	(0.2)			
BIGBAND:	2.56	UNCH			

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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

Noshing On Niches

With myriad cable nets specializing in non-fiction fare and viewers gobbling up the genre like Girl Scout cookies, it should be halcyon days for content creators and producers. Not exactly, said veteran prod and **Thinkfactory Media** founder *Leslie Greif*, whose company is behind **A&E's** "Gene Simmons Family Jewels" and has 3 cable series premiering next month. The dollars are lower due to a non-fiction content glut, said Greif, but more problematic is the new imperative for producers "to define a show that's really going to work for particular networks" as the proliferation of niches has made cable programmers increasingly picky about the shows they air. The winning nets over the long run will be those that assiduously focus on psychographics over demos, he said, noting how **History's** "proactive" research into what content its viewers want to see has paced the net's heady ratings momentum. Plus, said Greif, History "helps producers shape shows to conform to what their viewers like." Coming to the net from Thinkfactory is "Mounted in Alaska" (Apr 7), about a family-run taxidermy business. The show obviously fits History, unlike "Unleashed: K-9 Broward County," a series featuring a 2-deputy, 1-dog law enforcement unit that's set for **TLC**—unfortunately for Greif, also Apr 7. It's "the 'Lethal Weapon' of reality TV," said Greif, anything but a dry procedural because the deputies are very charismatic. **TLC** liked the show because it's fond of "shows about people and what it's like to do their jobs," he said, yet Unleashed has sufficient action to have also earned feature on male-driven **Discovery Channel**. Think has "Sinbad: It's Just Family" (Apr 12) ready to roll for **WE tv**, which greenlit the show because it's co-medic and offers views "about family life from a different perspective," said Greif. Having also produced shows for **VH1** and **MTV**, Think's proving that the niche non-fiction cable world is indeed navigable. Exacting too, but the fervent viewership is a tasty treat. *CH*

Highlights: "Nurse Jackie," season III premiere, Mon, 10p, **Showtime**. Go ahead, jump in, you can catch seasons I, II later. Season III of this dark drama/comedy about pill-addicted Nurse Jackie Peyton (*Edie Falco*) may be its best. -- "Triangle" Remembering the Fire," Fri, 6:30p, **HBO**. Parallels between NY on 9/11 and the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, 100 years ago on Mar 25, are startling. This excellent doc brings emotion and depth. *SA*

Worth a Look: "Mildred Pierce," Sun, 9p, **HBO**. Move this up to "Highlights" if you've not read *James M. Cain's* 1941 novel. In fairness, Cain's detailed book is tough to translate to the screen. **HBO** tried mightily. Production values, particularly the music, are excellent; as are *Kate Winslet* as Pierce and *Evan Rachel Wood* as her troubled but talented daughter. -- "Coal," premiere, Wed, 10p, **Spike**. **Discovery** has gold diggers and crab fishers, **History** has loggers and ice truckers, and **Spike** has coal miners. Oh, it's a manly series. *SA*

Notable: "Lights Out" (**FX**, Tues, 10p) ends gloriously, with a cameo from '70's "it" girl *Valerie Perrine* in next week's penultimate ep. -- It's early, but fledgling **OWN's** best is doc series "Our America with *Lisa Ling*" (Tues, 10p). This week Ling updates stories from the first 6 eps.

Basic Cable Rankings (3/14/11-3/20/11) Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.6	2580
2	DSNY	1.8	1793
3	FOXN	1.7	1647
4	TNT	1.5	1534
4	TBSC	1.5	1523
6	HIST	1.3	1310
7	FAM	1.2	1232
7	CNN	1.2	1181
9	A&E	1.1	1139
9	NAN	1.1	1138
9	MTV	1.1	1069
12	FX	1	1019
12	HGTV	1	996
12	TRU	1	962
15	ADSM	0.9	933
15	ESPN	0.9	893
15	LIFE	0.9	869
15	SYFY	0.9	855
15	NKJR	0.9	626
20	FOOD	0.8	830
20	CMDY	0.8	810
20	DISC	0.8	774
20	TLC	0.8	773
24	TVLD	0.7	705
24	SPK	0.7	688
24	MSNB	0.7	674
24	AMC	0.7	673
24	BRAV	0.7	646
24	BET	0.7	628
30	HALL	0.6	566
30	LMN	0.6	483
30	ID	0.6	460
33	EN	0.5	494
33	NGC	0.5	342
35	VH1	0.4	430
35	APL	0.4	423
35	TRAV	0.4	396
35	WE	0.4	303
35	OXYG	0.4	302
35	GSN	0.4	292
35	NKTN	0.4	227
35	HMC	0.4	151
43	ESP2	0.3	335
43	HLN	0.3	300
43	CMT	0.3	265
43	SOAP	0.3	255

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

CableFAX workshop

April 5, 2011 8:45am-4:30pm NYC

How to Motivate Employees to Boost Bottom Line and Retention

Reports and statistics show that a motivated workplace is essential to the financial success of an organization. With cable competition perhaps at an all-time high and budgets tighter than they've been in years, MSOs, programmers and vendors must maximize employee talent. On top of that, managers are being asked to do more with less. In this climate, motivation, leadership and retention have become even more important to the bottom-line.

Questions: Contact Kate Schaeffer at kschaeffer@accessintel.com or 301.354.2303

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