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What the Industry Reads First

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Your Consultation: Accenture Believes IBB Will Bring More Tech Expertise

Accenture made news this month with its planned purchase of Philly-based **IBB Consulting**, a firm whose tentacles extend to broadband, mobile, tech and advanced advertising. IBB will join Accenture's existing communications, media & tech (CMT) practice, but it obviously has certain ramifications for the firm's many cable operator clients. "It's no secret that [cable] is looking for new product offerings to drive new revenue, that the core base is under duress. When we started to look at how we could expand the breadth of services that we provide the cable industry, an acquisition became an obvious choice for that," said *Greg Douglass*, senior managing director for CMT within Accenture. "IBB clearly rose to the top as somebody that's well versed across all dimensions of the cable industry, with a particular technology expertise—whether that be the home, IoT, wireless or whether that be next-generation network services in the B2B space." Sixteen-year-old IBB has some specific expertise in dynamic ad platforms, as well as OTT and new product launches, including mobility. Keep in mind that Accenture isn't just in the consulting game. It also boasts a roster of US-based operators who rely on the Accenture Video Solution platform to deliver IP-based video, either in an OTT fashion or as part of their core offerings. Douglass declined to name those stateside clients, but AVS' roster includes **BT TV**, the subscription IPTV service offered by UK telecom company **BT Group**. Accenture's main goal with this acquisition for its cable clients is to help them find new revenue streams. Top of mind right now is the business services space, particularly enterprise clients. **Comcast** just announced the creation of a new unit to target Fortune 1000 companies with multiple locations nationwide. **Charter** has been vocal that the sector was a big factor in its **Time Warner Cable** and **Bright House** acquisitions. The company's 2Q earnings show total commercial revenue—enterprise and small- and medium-business combined—grew by 9.5% with enterprise growing by 9.3% (that number swells to 13% if cell backhaul and Charter's NaviSite unit is excluded). "With consumer play being so flat right now, at least from core services, the natural growth trajectory is enterprise," Douglass said. "And they have some unique assets... I think it's going to be a very competitive space here with the telcos." For years, some have chalked up cable's advantage as just being able to offer an alternative to the entrenched telcos, similar to satellite, telco and OTT's entry into video. But Douglass believes there's more at play. "Right now, it's also about the facilities you have, the bandwidth you have and the geographies. Cable companies have some significant bandwidth in a



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lot of the major metro areas. It's not just choice. It's also the quality and capability of that choice," he said, adding that, of course, telcos are ramping up to compete. Accenture expects the IBB acquisition to close in the coming weeks.

M&A: The **FTC** granted early termination in its merger review of **Disney's** \$1.58bln purchase of the majority of **BAMtech**, which it's using to launch a multi-sports streaming service early next year. Disney also plans to roll out a direct-to-consumer streaming service in 2019.

FCC Staff Moves: **FCC** commish *Mignon Clyburn* on Wednesday named *Louis Peraertz* senior legal advisor covering wireless, international and public safety issues. Clyburn also announced the departure of legal advisor *Daudeline Meme*, who had covered the same subject matter since March 2016. Peraertz most recently served as a special counsel in the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Office of General Counsel. He previously served in Clyburn's office from 2009-2016. Also on Wednesday, commish *Mike O'Rielly* hired *Brooke Ericson* as his chief of staff, press contact and media advisor, effective Oct 2. She currently serves as deputy chief of staff for Sen *Ron Johnson* (R-WI).

Theory of Evolution: Colorado-based **Evolution Digital** says 23 US pay-TV providers are now deploying its **eVUE-TV** IP video platform. New additions to its client roster include **Cablevision of Marion County**, **BELD**, **DTC**, **LHTC Broadband**, **Tulahoma Utilities Board**, **Valley Telecom Group** and **Gold Coast Broadband**. The company has previously reached deals with **GCI**, as well as a number of **NCTC** members. The service allows operators to offer VOD, live IP linear, PPV and network DVR services.

Ratings: **Telemundo** is touting a viewership victory, as it is set to finish the 2016-17 broadcast season as the No. 1 Spanish-language network in prime among key demos. The net averaged 858K viewers in the A18-49 demo, 398K of whom also fall into the A18-34 category. It registered its highest share ever in Spanish-language TV, surpassing **Univision** and **Unimas** among A18-49 (43%) and A18-34 (45%).

Hulu Hits Roku: **Hulu** is rolling out its live TV service and new user interface on a number of **Roku** devices and TVs. Other platforms supported by the live TV service include **Apple TV**, **Xbox One**, **Android**, **iOS**, **Chromecast** and **Amazon Fire** devices. -- Meanwhile, Roku amended its IPO registration with the **SEC** and will now offer more than 18mln shares of Class A common stock at a maximum of \$14 each. It hopes to raise upwards of \$252mln in the IPO.

Amazing Grace: **Nielsen**-owned **Gracenote** has partnered with interactive TV ad providers **Connekt** and **Ensequence** to bring new interactive capabilities to linear TV ads and other programming. Gracenote's Video Automatic Content Recognition Technology allows marketers to run an interactive overlay on top of a traditional TV ad in order to present special offers or promotions. It does this with frame-by-frame image recognition that identifies the ad the brand wishes to enhance. **Connekt** and **Ensequence** will manage advertising relationships, creative direction and execution for clients.

Programming: **UP TV** acquired episodes "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" for its fall programming lineup, including seasons hosted by original host *Drew Carey* as well as those with *Aisha Tyler* at the head. The improv show will come to the network first with a five-hour marathon on Oct 1 at 7pm ET before arriving in its regular timeslot on Sundays from 8pm-1am ET and weeknights at 11pm ET. -- **Netflix** is adding another comedy to its slate of original programming from three of comedy's leading ladies. *Natasha Lyonne*, *Leslye Headland* and *Amy Poehler* will head the eight-episode series, which follows a young woman on an inescapable party night in NYC. -

People: **FuboTV** hired *Yale Wang* as vp, head of North American marketing. He will report to co-founder/CMO *Alberto Horihuela*. Wang has experience promoting OTT products after most recently serving as vp and head of marketing for **Warner Bros**-owned SVOD service **DramaFever**. During his time at Warner Bros. Digital Networks, he worked with *Horiheula*, as well as fellow fubo co-founders *David Gandler* and *Sung Ho Choi*. -- **National Geographic Global Networks** tapped *Christian Drobnyk* to take over the position of evp, programming strategy and acquisitions for National Geographic Channels. Most recently svp, programming strategy, acquisitions and co-pro for **Lifetime** and **Lifetime Movie Network**, *Drobnyk* will guide the programming, planning and acquisitions for **Nat Geo**, **Nat Geo WILD** and **Nat Geo Mundo** while also coordinating global launches from the NY office. -- *Otto Bell* has been given a heightened level of responsibility at **Turner Ignite** with his new title, chief creative officer for **CNN Courageous**, Turner's first-ever brand studio. Bell came to Turner just over two years ago to launch the in-house studio, and will continue to lead it in his new position.

Think about that for a minute...

Noise Cancelling

Commentary by Steve Effros

In another few days we'll once again witness expected protesters in front of the **FCC** building. Last time, they were beating pots and pans. This time it's anyone's guess, but the issue is still the same. The protesters don't like what they anticipate the FCC is eventually going to do, which is modify or totally reverse its position on whether broadband should be regulated as a "Title II" common carrier. Counting noses on this one is not that hard. It's going to be a 3-2 vote in favor of overturning the Wheeler FCC's decision to regulate broadband as a common carrier for the first time.



I don't think we have to go through the whole set of arguments here, or the legal background; you've read about that enough. It's the response to what the Commission is now proposing that I want to focus on; the almost 22 million "comments" that have been filed. Of course that's a record number of comments. It also, as I've noted in the past, is somewhat irrelevant to the decisions the Commission is going to make because most of those "comments" don't really fit within the parameters of what a "comment" is intended to contain according to the Administrative Procedure Act. This is all Kabuki theatre, showmanship, political noise. But some folks will try to make it sound significant, we can be sure of that.

There will be all sorts of headlines about "the public" overwhelmingly involved in an arcane legal proceeding. Nonsense. The public was induced ... on both sides ... to participate in a show. As has been noted, there are millions of "comments" originating from the same web address. There are other millions from foreign web addresses or email mills that just churn out the same "comment" over and over again for the sole purpose of goosing up the numbers on one side or the other. It's going to make for considerable noise and lots of posturing,

but in the end it's not going to make much difference to the Commissioners.

The question that should be asked is how to deal with all this. The clear reason that the Commission—or any politician's office, agency, etc. that is the target of an organized response—is suddenly getting vastly more response than ever before is that the technology is now so easy to trigger such responses. That doesn't really make any given issue more or less important, it just means more folks can find it very easy to simply push a button and "participate" in the given issue, even if they don't fully understand what the issue is! The ease of communication has cheapened the value of much of it, especially when it comes to automated volumes of "comments" as is the case here.

So what do we do? One knowledgeable attorney has proposed requiring far more detailed formats for filings in such a way that they can't easily be mass manufactured. He also suggests the possibility of a filing fee to deter the game players. I don't agree. Making it harder for the average person to participate in the rulemaking process is a mistake because there are indeed those "average" folks who come up with very useful information and ideas. That's what rulemaking proceedings are supposed to elicit.

To be sure, that means the "games" will still be played. But the recipients of campaign-induced filing deluges are fully capable of ignoring the noise when they hear it. Let's not put earplugs in to keep it all out, we may miss something important.

Steve

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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)



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