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What the Industry Reads First

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Hiring Mission: Cable Continues to Find New Ways to Reach Military Members

It's been a few years since cable companies announced various initiatives to support military hiring, but their commitment seems to have only grown stronger with the passage of time. Charter's pledge to hire 20K US workers over the next four years includes efforts to ensure that some of those roles are taken by veterans or military spouses. "We're looking at a 5-10% increase in our veteran hiring efforts. We're currently at about 12K vets across the company, and we have plans of expanding that," said Seth Feit, Charter's group vp for talent. Since 2010, Comcast NBCU has hired more than 13K members of the military community. "We now track all of our hiring to include military spouses so that we can also support our military employees in professional development," said Comcast's svp, military and veteran affairs Carol Eggert, who retired from the US Army as a Brigadier General. There are countless other companies within the industry that also have stepped up to make military hiring a priority. In January, Mission Media, the industry's collective effort to hire and retain military veterans, will host a career booth at the Student Veterans of America National Conference, which includes more than 2K veteran scholars who have chosen to use higher education to transition to a career and civilian life. Organizations that have committed to participating in the booth include A+E Networks, Comcast, Charter, CTHRA, NCTA, SCTE, Disney, Viacom, Vyve Broadband and WICT. "You'd be surprised how well we all work together to support one another's initiatives. We learn from one another; we support one another. There's absolutely no competition here," Eggert said. Also in January, Mission Media, which is managed by CTHRA, will launch a storytelling initiative to highlight the success of veterans working in the media entertainment and cable industry. The storytelling initiative will be sponsored by business software company Talmatrix. One part of recruitment efforts includes being where military members are. Charter is literally on base as an inaugural participant in the recently opened Career Resource Center at North Carolina's Fort Bragg Army base. The center, the brainchild of the Columbia Southern Education Group, allows members transitioning out of the service to prepare for a new career before they even leave the base. Charter held its first training class for field techs at the center in September. Other companies participating at launch are Adaptive Construction Solutions, CVS Health, Veterans Assembled electronics, Onward to Opportunity, NC Truck Driver Training School and NC State Univ Agricultural Institute. "We pay a pretty nominal fee annually—maybe \$10K-\$15K in facilities related maintenance

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for the facility and we have access to these transitioning military and they consider careers with us and other companies in the partnership,” Feit said. “Of course, as we do this, it’s like ‘what other military establishments can we look at?’ We’re exploring those kind of things, partnering with the military so closely.” Comcast has recently been working on providing more assistance to National Guard and Reserve members—especially timely given that many were activated to help after recent hurricanes, as well as the wildfires in Northern California. It’s the law that companies must support them, but Comcast is looking for ways to take that support to the next level. Eggert recalls how someone on her team got the call on a Tuesday night at 8pm that he needed to be at the Armory with his entire transportation company by 8am the next day to help with relief efforts. “We have what’s called a concierge service,” she explained. “Instead of having to notify a bunch of different supervisors, you call one number and our concierge takes care of the orders, any administrative pay issues, so that person can go ahead and get ready for duty.” Aware that Guard/Reservist pay is sometimes less than their Comcast NBCU paycheck, the company also has committed to make up the gap. Comcast NBCU was one of 15 recipients of this year’s Secretary of Defense Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve “Freedom Award,” the highest honor the Department of Defense awards to employers for support of their National Guard and Reserve employees. It’s no small feat, given that ESGR received nominations for more than 2500 different companies. “[Comcast Cable pres/CEO] Dave Watson will tell you that our commitment to hiring is a North Star to get everyone thinking about the military community as a channel of talent,” Eggert said. “We will continue to do it. It’s not like we’ll hit a number and stop. We’re trying to make it a routine part of our talent acquisition strategy.”

Severing Ties: FX Networks and its production company ended its relationship with comedian *Louis C.K.* on Friday in the wake of his confirmation of sexual harassment allegations. The Fox subsidiary ended FX Productions’ overall deal with C.K.’s *Pig Newton* production company, and he will no longer serve as an exec producer on “Better Things,” “Baskets,” “One Mississippi” and “The Cops.” FX said it was previously unaware of any of the allegations about C.K.’s conduct, adding he had been professional on all of the FX projects he has produced to the company’s knowledge. Shortly following FX’s Friday afternoon statement, **TBS** announced it was indefinitely suspending production on “The Cops,” a co-production between FX Productions and **Turner**-owned studio **T**, slated to air on the Turner-owned net.

Altice Reorg: Altice USA chmn/CEO *Dexter Goei* was appointed CEO of **Altice N.V.**, following the resignation of *Michel Combes*. Goei will continue to focus on the US, but take on added responsibilities for the company as a whole. Digital advertising and the Dominican Republic CEO will report to him. Combes’ departure comes after Altice shares lost a third of their value in a week.

Reason Being: FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* accused critics of his deregulatory agenda of stifling innovation during his keynote address at Thursday night’s Reason Media Awards. Earlier this week, both Democratic FCC commishes—*Jessica Rosenworcel* and *Mignon Clyburn*—expressed concerns about this upcoming Thursday’s vote to allow for voluntary implementation of ATSC 3.0 by broadcasters. While Pai didn’t directly reference his colleagues’ remarks, his speech at the Libertarian publication’s event certainly rebutted their sentiment. “[Critics] dwell on the challenges inherent in any technological transition instead of embracing the benefits that innovation will bring,” he said. “And they want to impose extensive government regulation that could strangle Next Gen TV in its infancy. To be sure, these opponents inherit a



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long tradition going all the way back to the late 19th century, when many denounced the development of the automobile. But this tradition is rooted in fear and opportunism, not freedom and opportunity.” His criticism of ATSC 3.0 “opponents” captured the overall theme of the speech—that fear of the future will keep society stuck in the past. Referring to opponents of the ATSC 3.0 issue, as well as another docket item that would expedite the retirement of copper networks in favor of fiber, Pai said, “I find it amusing that many of those who reject the two proposals I’ve just discussed describe themselves as ‘progressives.’ What’s progressive about standing in the way of progress?”

Super Starz: Starz picked up 400K subs this past quarter, besting **Macquarie Research’s** estimate of 200K. Starz’s rise to a total sub base of 24.5mln reverses a three-quarter downward sub trend and brings it back to the all-time high level it reached after the same period last year. “We estimate the major MVPDs lost 463Ksubs in a quarter marked by storms/competition from OTT. Yet, Starz bucked the trend,” Macquarie’s *Amy Yong* wrote. The premium net generated revenue of \$359mln in the quarter, up 3% YOY. The net is coming up on the one-year anniversary of being acquired by **Lionsgate**. **Bernstein Research’s** *Todd Juenger* called Lionsgate’s earnings “a perfect oasis of relief” following a tough week for media. He declared Starz “an under-appreciated premium service” and expressed excitement about the pending launch of a Starz OTT service in international markets. “All the elements seem to be in place,” he wrote. “The [total addressable market] is huge and the capital at risk is low.” Yong asserted the 3Q sub adds are a sign Starz is moving in the right direction. “Originals like Power/Outlander are resonating among under-served demos; success is encouraging [Lionsgate] management to allocate more marketing/programming spend to Starz.” -- In other Starz news, the net is entering the world of unscripted programming, greenlighting four new docuseries covering the criminal justice system (“Wrong Man”), a youth sports program (“Warriors of Liberty City”), fashion (“In Fashion) and the powerful influence of hip-hop music on US culture (“The Field”). Starz vp, original programming *Patrick McDonald* will oversee the development of the series.

Wicked Awesome: **Fubo TV** reached a multiyear agreement allowing the virtual MVPD to carry **NESN**, the New England-area RSN that carries the majority of Red Sox and Bruins games. A jv of the Red Sox’s parent company and sports hospitality company **Delaware North**, NESN is among the most prominent in the country. The net will be part of Fubo’s base package for subs in Connecticut (excluding Fairfield County), Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. The service will be available to those in the region at a promo price of \$19.99/month for two months, and \$44.99/month thereafter. Fubo subs will also have authenticated access to NESN’s TV Everywhere service, **NESNgo**. The NESN deal follows Fubo’s recent deal to carry **MSG Networks** in the NY metro area.

Ratings: **MLB Network** scored its best-ever postseason viewership figure during this year’s playoffs, averaging 90K total-day viewers. The net has increased postseason viewership each of the past seven seasons. It scored its most-viewed day on record with 813K viewers on Oct 6, which featured Game 2 between the Yankees and Indians.

Set-Top Stats: **Nielsen** and **Comcast** have come together on a deal to include anonymous set-top data from Comcast subs in Nielsen’s local TV measurement service. This marks the fourth major cable or satellite provider to integrate TV viewership into the Nielsen panel of data. Effects of the deal will be seen in 2018, when the anonymized data will mix with data from other providers and Nielsen’s meters into local TV ratings.

Switching It Up: A US video streaming service has finally come to **Nintendo’s** latest video game console. Nintendo Switch owners with a Hulu subscription can access the service’s entire library and Live TV functionality on the device, which has sold 2.6mln units in the States since its release in March.

Oops!: **Cablefax** stated in Wednesday’s issue that **Charter** was among the ISPs impacted by **Level 3’s** service outage on Monday. Charter, in fact, was unaffected.



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