

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Full Bars: Xfinity Mobile Turning Heads With Major Growth

Xfinity Mobile continues to be **Comcast's** shining star, stealing the spotlight away from its core connectivity business. Wireless revenue grew 32% YOY in 1Q22, primarily due to the addition of 318,000 lines in the quarter.

Comcast Chairman/CEO *Brian Roberts* said during the company's 1Q22 earnings call Thursday that tests to deploy spectrum to potentially offload traffic is progressing. The company turned on its first 5G radios this past quarter, and an employee field test will launch in June. It's been a stellar few quarters for Xfinity Mobile and **Comcast Cable** President/CEO *Dave Watson* believes there is still a lot of runway in the business due to the ongoing efforts to package broadband and mobile together as a converged offering.

The earnings call came just one day after Comcast and **Charter** announced the formation of a JV to offer the former's streaming platform nationwide. Roberts acknowledged that there are always risks when working with a partner rather than owning and operating everything yourself, but Comcast and Charter have a track record of working together and achieving successful outcomes.

"There's pros and cons, but when another party brings something you don't have, that makes it a pro," he said. "One of the great things about our industry over the last several decades is how we keep reinventing the businesses we're in and it is pretty important to continue to find new growth

avenues... these are the kind of steps you have to make now to see those dividends down the road."

Broadband growth continues at a steady pace, albeit not reaching the magnificent heights observed during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The company recorded 262,000 broadband net additions during the quarter with revenues increasing 8% thanks to an increase in average rates. Through the pandemic, Comcast participated in a number of programs to keep its customers connected, and the subscribers that received service for free have not previously been included in the company's sub counts. Those COVID-related programs ended at the close of 2021, triggering a one-time benefit in the quarter. CFO *Michael Cavanagh* estimated the change accounted for approximately one-third of first quarter net additions.

Watson said it is a fact that the environment is more competitive than ever, but maintaining the company's market position in the face of advancements from fiber providers and fixed wireless opponents hasn't been keeping him up at night. Rather, the industry's macro issues are prompting more conversations among the MVPD's leadership teams.

"There's been most certainly an uptick in competitive performance, and we see it. We've anticipated it. But the main issues we believe are the macro issues that our move activity is down," Watson said. "We have seen actually, in our footprint, the move activity in March continued to be less move activity, change of address, in March than it was in February." The three areas of opportunity for the company moving forward



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are expanding its footprint within its traditional cable areas, proactive builds and rural edge-outs.

Video continued on its downward trend with revenue falling 1.5% on the back of 512,000 subscriber losses. That revenue number was partially offset by higher average revenue per customer due to a rate increase that took effect at the start of the year. Roberts is happy with the way that Comcast has adapted to changing viewing habits rather than trying to push linear TV on customers that “perhaps is a rock up a hill.” Moving forward, aggregation is the real opportunity for a distributor like Comcast, whether that’s through the JV with Charter, on **Peacock** or on the XClass TVs launched in October.

ALTICE LOSES BROADBAND SUBS IN 1Q22

Altice USA continues to see weak broadband results, posting a loss of 13K customers in 1Q22 compared to a gain of 12K a year ago. Overall, residential customer relationships declined 1.5% YOY, with unique residential customer net losses totaling 21K. CEO *Dexter Goei* is confident Altice will grow broadband subs in the second half of the year, but said there’s “imperfect visibility” on whether the provider will end the year net positive. “We believe we are in a significantly better competitive position today than we were 12 months ago. And we’re moving full steam ahead preparing for the launch of our own multi-gig fiber broadband service later this year on our Optimum fiber network,” Goei said on Thursday’s after-the-bell earnings call. He does expect broadband ARPU to grow for the year, which he attributed more to customers taking 1 Gig service vs Altice’s price point. Where 1 Gig services are available, 46% of new customers took the service. Management views 1 Gig as a significant growth opportunity, with 17% of residential customers currently taking the speed tier. Altice is also going after subsidies for broadband. It has applied for subsidies for rolling out FTTH to more than 150,000 homes and was awarded its first grant in Yavapai County, Arizona, for 8,000 homes in 1Q22. “We are applying for every single community where we have a competitive advantage,” Goei said. “There are twists and turns in every single one of these. Sometimes they start with RFPs saying 20,000 homes, then they can come back and say ‘no, we actually want to do 5,000 homes and then we’ll figure out the other 15,000 homes some other place.’ It’s really a lot of back-door politics in terms of how to allocate money locally.” Goei’s commentary on fixed wireless is similar to his peers, with the bottom line being it’s not much of a competitive threat at this point. On the Optimum side of the business, Altice doesn’t see much of **Starry** except in some MDUs. A big chunk of **Verizon**’s fixed wireless numbers came from business—“construction sites and mobile businesses and such,” the CEO said. For the Suddenlink side, “I think equally,

Cablefax Executive Round Up

How is your company moving toward a carbon-neutral footprint?



Teresa Elder

CEO

WOW!

“WOW!’s values align with our efforts to become better environmental stewards. We use innovative routing technology to optimize technician driving times which reduces fossil fuel use. Our next generation set-top

boxes use a fraction of the energy used by legacy equipment. Our hybrid work model has reduced the time our employees spend commuting and our company-wide real estate footprint has been greatly reduced. We’ve also improved energy efficiency in our data centers by implementing new battery technology and other measures.”



Mark Greatrex

President

Cox Communications

“This Earth Day season, I’m energized by how we’re driving long-term sustainability at Cox. For us, it’s about leaving our world a better place for the next generation, and I’m pleased to share that Cox Communications

has recently reached our goal of zero waste to landfill. Since our Cox Conserves program began 15 years ago, we’ve invested \$100 million in sustainability projects and reduced the carbon footprint across the entire Cox Enterprises businesses by more than 650,000 tons. It’s all part of our Cox Enterprises goal to be zero waste to landfill by 2024 and carbon and water neutral by 2034. We can make an incredible difference when we work together!”



Peter Kiriacoulacos

EVP & Chief Procurement Officer

Comcast

“Comcast has a goal to be carbon neutral by 2035 across our global operations. Our top priority is sourcing clean, renewable energy, and we recently [announced an agreement](#) to power most of our Mid-Atlantic operations

with solar electricity beginning in 2025. Other priorities include piloting electric and hybrid vehicles for our fleet and driving energy efficiency gains across our business, including facilities, parks, network and data centers, with the ultimate goal of reducing emissions while delivering the products and experiences our customers count on.”



Brigitta Witt

VP, Corporate & Sustainability

T-Mobile

“T-Mobile recently met its industry-leading renewable energy and science-based emission reduction targets. As we accelerate our sustainability journey, we’re carefully considering how we can continue driving progress across

our entire value chain to achieve meaningful carbon reductions. This work is anchored by our collaboration with the SBTi and GeSI to ensure our efforts continue to align with leading climate science, and are consistent with emissions levels required to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.”

we're not seeing pressure today in our selling footprint," he said. "It doesn't mean that we don't expect to see it going forward." Mobile net additions in the quarter were +12K, supported by new mobile promotions. Mobile revenue grew +25% YOY to \$24 million. Quarterly video net losses were 74,000 vs 54,000 in 1Q21. Total revenue fell 2.3% to \$2.42 billion, while free cash flow decreased 61.3% to \$207.8 million.

CABLELABS SHOWCASES DOCSIS 4.0 DEMOS

CableLabs is more committed than ever to achieving the cable industry's 10G milestone, but its reach has slowly extended far beyond the DOCSIS technology it has become known for. "A lot of people think of us purely as the DOCSIS people. Our history over many, many decades is all DOCSIS, but fiber for us over the last six or seven years has quickly grown to actually be a larger research area as far as total dollars spent here in the CableLabs budget," CableLabs CEO *Phil McKinney* said during a 10G Showcase Thursday. The spotlight there is on coherent optics. He also took a moment to highlight the immense amount of work CableLabs is doing in the mobile space. Of the 65 members that fund the R&D lab, more than half are mobile operators. 5G and beyond has been central to CableLabs' work, and it was recently selected by **NTIA** to be the host lab for the U.S. government's 5G Challenge. Even so, much of the focus of the actual presentation was on DOCSIS 4.0 and the capabilities the standard will unlock. **Comcast** achieved its highest speeds yet over a 10G connection on a live network during a demo, reaching download speeds faster than 8 Gbps and upload speeds above 5 Gbps. Representatives from Comcast, **Charter** and **Cox** declined to specify when they expect to begin rolling out DOCSIS 4.0 to customers, but putting a modem that supports the standard in a customer's home will be one of the easier parts of the deployment process. "If you ask me in this moment in time, it's planning the future given the current state of the supply chain," Charter EVP/CTO *Stephanie Mitchko-Beale* said when discussing potential challenges. "Trying to make decisions today for three years out is not an easy thing. So those are the things we talk about all the time as we decide strategically how we're going to roll the technology out over time."

PEACOCK SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS

Peacock flew in 1Q22, gaining 4 million paid subscribers and growing to achieve more than 13 million paid subs and 28 million monthly active accounts in the U.S. Due to variations in the content slate throughout the year, **NBCU** does not expect to see this type of growth consistently and guided to more modest subscriber gains until later this year. That's when Peacock will become the exclusive home of the next-day **NBC** broadcast slate. While talk of disruption and a slowdown in the growth of SVOD services has been highly debated since **Netflix's** earnings release last week, NBCU believes that not having Peacock as its sole focus will prevent it from feeling some of those industry pressures. "We think it's an extension of our existing TV business, and we manage it that way. That's how we set up our business, that's how we program it. That's how we sell advertis-

ing, across both linear and Peacock," **NBCUniversal** CEO *Jeff Shell* said. "We're happy with how the business is scaling and I think the noise in the rest of the streaming business really, if anything, just validates where we're going."

PARTIES UNITE ON SPECTRUM INNOVATION ACT

Reps. *Mike Doyle* (D-PA) and *Bob Latta* (R-OH) as well as Sens. *Ben Ray Lujan* (D-NM) and *John Thune* (R-SD) introduced the Spectrum Innovation Act of 2022 Thursday in an attempt to free up new airwaves for mobile broadband technology. The bill would help make available at least 200MHz of spectrum available for auction and take a deeper look at flexible spectrum uses. "In consultation with relevant federal partners, the legislation would allow this band to be modeled after the successful 3.5 GHz Citizens Broadband Radio Service shared-use approach, which has been proven to protect the important federal uses of the band, garnered an unprecedented number of auction participants, and supports a wide range of use cases," **NCTA** said in a statement.

HBO LEADS NAMIC VISION AWARDS

HBO once again had a strong showing at the 2022 **NAMIC** Vision Awards, taking home five awards for the sixth consecutive year. **HBO Max's** "Insecure" and "We're Here" were among winners, and *Zendaya* earned best performance in drama for "Euphoria." **ESPN** followed with two awards for "Somos Afro-Latinos" and "Darren Waller: Gratitude," while **PBS Kids, TBS, Comcast, Hulu** and **NBCUniversal** were also among the [17 total winners](#).

MEDIACOM SEES IOWA EXPANSION

Mediacom grew its fiber optic network in five unserved rural Iowa communities across Crawford and Keokuk Counties. The network reaches nearly 600 residential and business locations where customers can receive download speeds of up to 1 Gbps. Mediacom combined funds from the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program and \$1 million of its own private capital to offset network construction costs.

AT&T, CORNING LAUNCH TRAINING PROGRAM

AT&T and **Corning** teamed up to create a new training program focused on equipping technicians and network specialists with skills important for design, installation, engineering and managing an expanding fiber network. The Fiber Optic Training Program builds on AT&T's goal of reaching 30 million locations with fiber by 2025 and will be led by industry specialists. The program is expected to be available in time to support the investments in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

PROGRAMMING

Hulu will be the new home for "Schitt's Creek" starting Oct. 3, with the popular comedy cycling off **Netflix**. The show swept all comedy categories in the 2020 Primetime Emmy Awards. – **GAC Family** is presenting the "K-9 Hero Awards" on May 12 at 5pm. Created in partnership with Project K-9 Hero, the program will highlight police, fire department, search and rescue and military working K-9s. – **HBO** ordered 10-episode animated DC series "Noonan's," a spin-off of Max Original "Harley Quinn."

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Moss Shines in New Apple+ Thriller

If you've read *Lauren Beukes'* best-selling 2013 novel "The Shining Girls," don't skip **Apple TV+**'s "Shining Girls" just because you already know the time-travelling serial killer plot. This metaphysical thriller starring *Elisabeth Moss*, who also serves as director and executive producer, still has plenty of twists. Showrunner *Silka Luisa* got creative in interpreting the book. "I think the fundamentals of what the book was trying to say, that we stayed true to," she said during a panel at the **TCA** Winter Tour. "The biggest transition I would say in adapting it would be anchoring it a lot more in Kirby's point of view. We really wanted to make the show very subjective, which I think for the mystery of it all really helped because you're sort of with Kirby going through this maze and you can only see ahead of you, and it's only until the end of the season you get really that kind of aerial view of what's going on." Kirby (Moss) is a Chicago newspaper archivist who suffered a traumatic assault and is left living in an ever-shifting reality. After learning a recent murder is tied to her attack, she teams up with a veteran reporter to try and hunt down the person responsible. Moss is no stranger to playing the role of tormented woman, with *Shining Girls* a reminder of how good she is at it. "I always try to pull in from my own life, even if I don't have a direct parallel with the character. I'm always trying to pull from any kind of experience I may have had because for me that just obviously is going to make it feel more real and more honest," Moss said. Not only does Moss dig deep to tap into Kirby's trauma, but she also had to direct the series. That juggling of roles isn't a bad thing. "The thing that I've found that I really enjoy about directing something that I'm acting in is that I have an intimate knowledge of the character and the scripts that I just wouldn't have otherwise," she said. "I felt pretty safe in Silka's hands and I felt safe in the show, and I felt as if I knew what she was trying to say." *Shining Girls* debuts Friday. — *Amy Maclean*

REVIEWS

"The Offer," series premiere, Apr. 28, **Paramount+**. It was an interesting choice for writers *Michael Tolkin* (**Showtime's** "Escape at Dannemora") and *Nikki Toscano* (**Amazon Prime's** extremely creative "Hunters") to choose *Albert Ruddy's* saga as a young producer of "The Godfather" as the centerpiece of this sometimes thin 10-parter. On the other hand, maybe it was logical. Much of the series' target audience—Godfather fanatics—already know *Francis Ford Coppola's* often-told tale about directing the film, feeling he'd be fired at any moment. Still, Coppola is a key player here, rendered well by *Dan Fogler*, as are *Al Pacino* (an excellent *Anthony Ippolito*) and *Marlon Brando* (*Justin Chambers*). Of course, we're not saying the back story it portrays is accurate. At times it seems far-fetched. Moreover, several people involved in making the epic have cast doubt on "The Offer's" veracity. Still, it's a decent look inside Hollywood and well-timed for the film's 50th anniversary. — "Anatomy of a Scandal," streaming, **Netflix**. No chance Netflix knew a porn scandal would break in Parliament this week when the network scheduled this excellent mini about a privileged minister accused of raping a staffer based on the *Sarah Vaughan* book. The parallels with *Brett Kavanaugh's* confirmation hearing brouhaha seem remarkable. Production values and cast are solid, though *Michelle Dockery*, as a barrister with a secret, seems miscast. — *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(04/18/22-04/24/22)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
TNT	0.846	2634
FNC	0.723	2251
ESPN	0.385	1198
MSNBC	0.362	1126
HGTV	0.330	1027
TLC	0.284	885
HALL	0.279	868
DISC	0.257	800
INSP	0.250	780
HIST	0.248	772
FOOD	0.212	662
CNN	0.210	654
USA	0.205	638
TBSC	0.194	603
LIFE	0.173	538
ID	0.168	525
TVLAND	0.160	500
A&E	0.152	472
HMM	0.138	429
AMC	0.135	421
WETV	0.131	407
FX	0.126	393
NATGEO	0.122	379
GSN	0.120	375
BRAVO	0.117	364
CRTN	0.111	344
TRAVEL	0.104	325
OXYGEN	0.101	316
NAN	0.100	310
NICK	0.099	308
PRMNT	0.098	306
APL	0.097	302
COM	0.086	269
NBATV	0.085	264

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