

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Caring & Sharing: CX Marks the Spot

With competition fierce on all fronts, operators are increasingly looking at how they can stand out by delivering a better customer experience. **Comcast** called it a priority for 2025 and a number of companies are unveiling new customer experience [CX] initiatives. On Thursday, **Midco** joined the trend with a 12-point Customer Commitment program that includes same-day repairs, contract buyouts and pricing transparency.

While many are familiar with the **Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center** for its annual Cable Hall of Fame celebration, Intrapreneurship Academy and Hauser Oral History project, the Institute has a near 20-year history of uniting CX leaders in connectivity through the CX Collaborative [CXC], formerly C5. Most of CXC's work happens at two in-person conferences each year and monthly virtual sessions, but we're getting a peek behind the curtain with Syndeo adding two panels from late last year to its just-created CX Archive of The Barco Library. It'll take about 3 hours to make it through the sessions moderated by retired **NCTA** SVP/ "Nicest Guy in Cable" **Rob Stoddard**, but **CFX** has you covered with some takeaways.

**We've Come a Long Way:** The general consensus is CX was a secondary focus until the 2000s. As the world changed and the DSL and DBS brought more competition, that shifted. Even the words used around the customer experience have evolved. "We used to refer to agents, representatives and customer service. Then we morphed it into customer care, but it was really focused on just the frontline interaction with customers. I think now as we've evolved into customer experience, we

truly are looking at the end-to-end experience," said **Maureen McCabe Moore**, **GCI's** Chief Customer Experience Officer.

**It's a Constant Evolution:** Syndeo CEO **Diane Christman** likened CX to a hot potato when the **Cable Center** began the C5 program in 2007 because a lot of folks didn't want to touch it, including Center board members. It took some convincing, with **Jana Henthorn**, former Cable Center SVP and eventually CEO, leading the charge. Those early discussions focused largely on call handling times, but eventually call centers were seen as just part of the equation. "From the early 2000s to today, the journey that we've been on is understanding the emotional piece of it, but fighting the headwind of that's great, but does that make me money? And/or does that make us profitable or more efficient? The short answer is yes, but it took time and it took insight," said **Graham Tutton**, a former Comcast exec who now is founder and lead advisor of **GTT and Associates**. **Cable One** Senior Director of Customer Operations **Kimberly Gibson** remembers 15 years ago when the company viewed the best service as no service, striving to mitigate customer interactions, such as making in-person payments. "[Now] we want customers to come into our space, utilize our products, and purchase, or be supported in this space," she explained. "We definitely have made some strides from going to be operationally efficient to looking at the customer's experience and their engagement with us and our company."

**CX Isn't Just About Frontline Employees:** "Our entire company is invested in NPS practices and thinking about how do we serve the customer and how do we understand the customer.

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If you're in HR or finance, there's still a requirement to understand what that experience is like and how far do you move it back upstream so the customer doesn't notice an issue," said *Brooke Pruter*, SVP, Customer Experience for Comcast.

**Collaboration is Key:** As consultant and former **Suddenlink** SVP, Customer Experience **Gibbs Jones** put it, **Capital One** and **Citibank** probably don't get together twice a year to talk about customer service. CXC is a pretty unique cross-collaborative group that doesn't just address issues at the 100,000-foot level. Instead, it is intimate enough to share Net Promoter scores among members. "Our meetings aren't... always touchy feely, but often the conversations are around someone coming to the table and going, 'We just tried this and it was a total disaster, let me first off share what happened and also get your feedback on maybe how I could do it better,'" said Jones.

**We're Watching Comcast (and Charter):** If you were part of the cable industry in 2015, you'll remember Comcast CEO *Brian Roberts* announcing a \$300 million, multi-year initiative at the annual Cable Show to improve customer experience. He even took reporters on a field trip to a [new Xfinity Store](#). It made a big impact on the industry as a whole as others followed suit. So, it's notable that Comcast has thrown down the gauntlet this year and said simplifying customer experience will be a priority for the company. And it's following some of the work **Charter** has already done with price guarantees and customer commitments. Pruter made the point that if customer experience is the North Star—the star moves. "If you're thinking about what customers expect, it's different today than it was 10 years ago," she said. "It's going to be different two years from now than it is today. And we've got to keep up with what other companies are thinking and doing, what you expect when you shop for your clothes, for your insurance, for your services. That's what we're being compared to, and it's a bar... that's not going to stop moving."

**Learn From Those on the Outside Too:** Interesting to hear Pruter talk about how Comcast draws inspiration from companies like **USAA**, **Delta Airlines** and **Costco**. It's also taking notes from **Chewy**, which is known for its personal touches. "We have a program called Xfinity Love that if we get a compliment from a customer or we hear a moment from a customer where they may be struggling, we'll actually send them [something]. One example is champagne glasses for a wedding, or sending remotes to a baby for their first birthday, things like that that make you human to the customer," she said.

## DOD'S OPENING SALVO IN THE SPECTRUM WARS

**NCTA** isn't feeling a **Department of Defense** plan for mid-band spectrum that would relocate CBRS spectrum. "A spectrum

proposal claiming to protect some government spectrum bands by helping Big Mobile kill off wireless competition is a bad deal for American consumers. America leads the world in advancing private wireless networks through CBRS technology and the rollout of WiFi technologies carrying nearly 90% of mobile data," said a statement from the group representing cable operators, which have relied on CBRS for wireless efforts. "Enabling these commercial wireless technologies to power a new generation of applications and services is critical to the next generation of wireless innovations. As we develop spectrum policies that protect national security and support wireless growth, we must reject false 'solutions' that cave to unreasonable carrier demands at the expense of fair, competitive access essential to millions of consumers and businesses." **New Street Research's Blair Levin** reported Thursday that DoD has begun circulating an initial proposal that would make 640 MHz of spectrum available for auction by moving current CBRS licensees/users from the 3.55 – 3.65 band to the 3.1 to 3.4 band (freeing up 100 MHz of spectrum). The plan, which looks similar to an **AT&T** proposal, also proposes vacating DoD systems in the 1300-1350 and the 1780-1850 bands (120 MHz), having the FCC clear 220 MHz in the upper C-Band for auction and vacating DoD systems in the 5850-5925 and 7125-7250 bands (200 MHz). Good news for cable is that Levin doesn't think this 'opening bid' represents anything close to a done deal. The bad news is that he believes it's the first time the government would change the license terms of one set of users to benefit a competitor of that first set of users. Levin predicts cable will sue if the ultimate plan goes after CBRS on the grounds that it violates their property rights under the PALs licenses they purchased. He's unsure on the outcome of litigation other than it would likely delay implementation for several years.

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## ROKU'S GETTING FRNDLY (TV)

**Roku** had its 1Q25 earnings call late Thursday afternoon, revealing ahead of it that it's buying **Frndly TV**, the vMVPD service that offers more than 50 channels in addition to on-demand content starting at \$6.99/month. The deal is worth \$185 million in cash, which includes \$75 million held back that's tied to meeting performance goals and milestones over the next two years. Frndly TV will continue to be available on all platforms and devices it's currently on, with the deal expected to close in 2Q25. Frndly TV's existing team will stay on after the merger closes. "Frndly TV's growth and expertise in direct-to-consumer subscription services make it a valuable addition to Roku, and we believe our expertise in recommending relevant content to viewers will help Frndly TV attract, engage and retain more subscribers. This acquisition is intended to support our focus on growing Platform revenue

and Roku-billed subscriptions,” Founder/CEO Anthony Wood and CFO Dan Jedda wrote in Roku’s 1Q25 shareholder letter. For 1Q25, Roku reported total net revenue of \$1.02 billion, up 16% YOY. Platform revenue was up 17% to \$880.8 million, and gross profit reached \$445 million—up 15% YOY. Streaming hours went up 5.1 billion hours to 35.8 billion. The Roku Channel’s streaming hours also grew YOY, posting an 84% jump.

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## CAR AGAIN CHALLENGES PARAMOUNT-SKYDANCE MERGER

The **Center for American Rights** made another push to get the **FCC** to add conditions to the proposed merger between **Paramount Global** and **Skydance**. The Conservative group filed a new brief Thursday in support of a petition it [sent in December](#), which asked for commitments tied to concerns about Skydance’s relationship with foreign governments and ideological views of **CBS News**. The latest CAR filing focuses more on a [report](#) released by the **Media Research Center** earlier this week that said the *Trump* administration has gotten 92% negative coverage from **ABC**, **CBS** and **NBC** during 1Q25. MRC said its analysts looked at 899 stories on the three networks’ evening newscasts that discussed the president or his administration, also finding coverage of tariffs fell 93% toward the negative side while **DOGE** cutbacks had a 97% negative spin. CAR said the negative coverage has a reciprocal relationship with Trump’s downturn in approval ratings, pointing to polling from Trump’s 100th day that showed an approval rating of 42-55 (ABC News), 43-53 (PBS) and 45-55 (CBS). “MRC’s new study confirms what the Petition observed previously: the news media generally, and CBS News in particular, is relentlessly slanted and biased,” the filing read. “The owners of New Paramount have told this Commission of their ‘commitment to fair and balanced newsgathering and reporting.’ So far, the current owners are failing to deliver on fair and balanced reporting, as confirmed most recently by MRC’s new report. Commission action is necessary to condition the petition on an end to this blatant bias.”

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## DEBUTING SPECTRUM NOTICIAS

**Charter** rolled out a new national Spanish-language news network in **Spectrum Noticias**. The network was added to Spectrum TV lineups across the company’s footprint, with local news bureaus having been set up in L.A., NYC, Florida and Texas. It’ll have 24 hours of continuous Spanish-language news from local communities as well as D.C. *María Rozman* was hired to oversee editorial content for Spectrum Noticias. She’s a five-time Emmy Award winner and most recently served as news director for **Telemundo** in Atlanta.

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## CARRIAGE

**Samsung TV Plus** is diving more into the intersection of sports and FAST channels. After an **NHL** season where it added **Victory+**

**Anaheim**, which lets Ducks fans in the SoCal area watch games, **Samsung TV Plus** is adding **Victory+ Dallas** for the Stars ahead of the 2025-26 season. It’ll premiere on the platform later this year. Other lineup additions include **Roku Sports Channel**, **NASCAR’s FAST** channel and **PBR RidePass**. – **Comcast** and **Charter’s** **jv Xumo** is also adding the **NASCAR Channel** to the **Xumo Play FAST** lineup. NASCAR’s platform showcases classic races, re-airings of the current season’s events, original series, documentaries and more. Additionally, Xumo will have an on-site presence at different NASCAR races this season, starting with Sunday’s Würth 400 as Xumo puts on the “Easy Street Pit Stop” for race goers.

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## NAD RECOMMENDS COX CHANGE UP SOME INTERNET CLAIMS

The **National Advertising Division** sided with **AT&T** in its challenge of certain **Cox Communications** internet claims. It recommended Cox discontinue the claim “Multi gig speeds everywhere” or modify it to accurately reflect the availability of its 2 Gbps tier service, saying that the claim must be supported by evidence that the availability of the advertised service extends to 100% of customers in any areas where the claim is made. AT&T also argued the claim conveyed that Cox offers both multi-gig download and upload, NAD found that in all but one of the challenged advertisements, Cox’s claim to offer “Multi-gig speeds” does not convey the message that Cox offers both download and upload speeds of at least 2 Gbps. For that one spot, it recommended modifications. NAD also called on Cox to discontinue the claim “Get into the fast lane with Cox Business and get speeds that are up to 20X faster than T-Mobile and AT&T 5G Internet” in markets where AT&T offers a fiber product with speeds faster than 100 Mbps to small business customers or modify its advertising to avoid conveying certain implied messages. In its advertiser statement, Cox stated that while it disagrees with certain aspects of NAD’s decision, it will comply with NAD’s decision and “is a strong supporter of self-regulation and will take NAD’s recommendations into account in developing its future advertising.” During the proceeding, Cox voluntarily permanently discontinued claims that Cox is the nation’s fastest internet provider that were based on an award from the website HighSpeedInternet.com.

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## PEOPLE

**AMC Networks** upped **Sam Zimmerman** to SVP, Programming and Acquisitions for **Shudder**. He’ll continue to oversee programming for Shudder ahead of the streamer’s 10-year anniversary, working alongside SVP, Acquisitions and Productions *Emily Gotto*. Zimmerman will report to *Scott Shooman*, Head of AMCN’s Film Group, and will be based in NY. – **Steve Lanzano**, **TVB’s** President/CEO, announced his retirement at the end of 2025. He’s led the trade association since January 2010 and ushered in initiatives such as the creation of national and local business development teams, expanded research offerings and growing membership to more than 800 local TV stations. TVB said it’s working with an executive search firm to embark on a nationwide hunt for Lanzano’s successor.



# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## Mom's the Word at Hallmark Channel

When it comes to reality TV, motherhood is often portrayed in a harsh or under-respected light. There's the classic "Super Nanny" that focused on parenting fails. **MTV** has touted over the years that "Teen Mom" helped reduce teen pregnancies. Everything you need to know about **TLC**'s "sMothered" is found in the name. So, leave it to **Hallmark Channel** to take a gentler approach to the subject with new unscripted series "The Motherhood," debuting May 5. Created and hosted by *Connie Britton*, the show helps single mothers create more balanced lives for themselves and their families with the help of experts in parenting, style and home. "When we were making the show, there were three crew members in different departments—all single mothers—who came up to me and said, 'I cannot believe the show hasn't been done,' and 'I'm so glad it exists.' 'This is the show that I've wanted all my life.' 'I don't feel that I've seen myself depicted at all on television,'" Hallmark Head of Unscripted *David Stefanou* told **CFX**. "Especially in unscripted TV, it's easy to lean into the drama that can come with mother-child relationships, especially mother-daughter relationships. But the show expressly exists to say, moms are amazing. Moms sometimes need help, and single moms in particular, need a little bit more help." Having spent eight years at **WE tv** and two at **Oxygen**, Stefanou knows about leaning into the controversy of family dynamics. But he's been with **Hallmark Media** for two years now and is focused on uplifting content. Watching an episode of *The Motherhood* is like someone pouring you a cup of tea and giving kind guidance. Stefanou credits Britton's vision. After adopting her son, she realized what a struggle—even with the help she has—that single motherhood can be. The first ep features her breaking bread in a beautiful barn with the moms and she continues to stay with them. "She's very committed to the idea of not just filming a show and going away. The idea was to really form a community where there wasn't one before," Stefanou said. "I think it's part of what we're doing here in unscripted at Hallmark—we're telling stories that warm the heart and that also hopefully put a little bit of good back in the world, which is not what unscripted TV usually does." — *Amy Maclean*

### REVIEWS

Not long before passing in 1833, English actor *Edmund Kean* said, "Dying is easy. Comedy is hard." Perhaps that explains why *Harrison Ford* would choose a role that mixes comedy and dying in his 82nd year. The paradigmatic tough guy, Ford has played against type, momentarily, in "Morning Glory" (2010), where a gruff TV newsman softens slightly to help embattled producer *Rachel McAdams*. In "Regarding Henry" (1991), Ford as a ruthless attorney, is shot in the head, with the resulting amnesia rendering him nearly helpless. Ford fans will enjoy his turn as gruff but ultimately lovable therapist Dr. Paul Rhoades in "Shrinking" (**Apple TV+**). He is a comic foil for *Jason Segel*'s Dr. Jimmy Laird, whose emotional attachment to patients at times borders on unethical. The strong ensemble includes *Jessica Williams* as Gaby, a young, unconventional therapist. It's not great TV, though an impressive comedic diversion during these serious times. — Of course, Ford takes, for him, a more conventional role in "1923" (**Paramount +**), paired with *Helen Mirren* as a predecessor to *Kevin Costner*'s John Dutton of "Yellowstone." It's also a grand time for Mirren, who doubles down on her excellent Irish accent on 23 and new crime series "MobLand" (also on Paramount+). In both, Mirren's matriarchs pull the levers, though it's more evident in *Mobland*. — *Seth Arenstein*

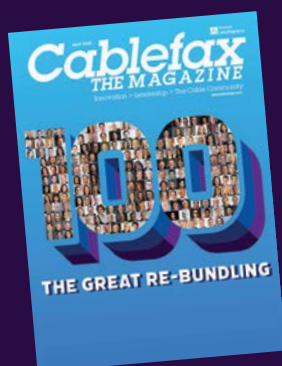
### BASIC CABLE

#### P2+ PRIME RANKINGS\*

(04/21/25-04/27/25)

MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
<b>TNT</b>	<b>0.743</b>	<b>2356</b>
<b>FNC</b>	<b>0.723</b>	<b>2293</b>
<b>ESPN</b>	<b>0.399</b>	<b>1265</b>
<b>MSNBC</b>	<b>0.364</b>	<b>1153</b>
<b>HGTV</b>	<b>0.196</b>	<b>622</b>
<b>HIST</b>	<b>0.146</b>	<b>464</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>0.146</b>	<b>462</b>
<b>CNN</b>	<b>0.142</b>	<b>452</b>
<b>TBSC</b>	<b>0.138</b>	<b>437</b>
<b>TLC</b>	<b>0.137</b>	<b>434</b>
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>0.129</b>	<b>410</b>
<b>HALL</b>	<b>0.126</b>	<b>398</b>
<b>INSP</b>	<b>0.123</b>	<b>391</b>
<b>DISC</b>	<b>0.119</b>	<b>378</b>
<b>TVLAND</b>	<b>0.104</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>GSN</b>	<b>0.091</b>	<b>290</b>
<b>ESPN2</b>	<b>0.088</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>0.086</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>HALLMYS</b>	<b>0.082</b>	<b>261</b>
<b>WETV</b>	<b>0.081</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>TRUTV</b>	<b>0.081</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>NWSMX</b>	<b>0.076</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	<b>0.074</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>FX</b>	<b>0.073</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>0.073</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>AMC</b>	<b>0.069</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>0.069</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>NAN</b>	<b>0.064</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>REELZ</b>	<b>0.062</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>BET</b>	<b>0.056</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>ADSM</b>	<b>0.055</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>COM</b>	<b>0.054</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>OXY</b>	<b>0.051</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>SNDNCE</b>	<b>0.051</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>0.049</b>	<b>156</b>

\*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.



## JUST RELEASED

The 2025 Cablefax 100 list, honoring the best of the best in the media and broadband industry.

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