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Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Keep it Easy: Wireless Helping Comcast, Charter Simplify Things

Simplicity is the new buzzword of late when operators talk about trends in what customers are prioritizing. Though it's rooted in a desire for more transparency around pricing—something **Charter**, **Comcast** and several others have addressed recently—making things more efficient takes on several meanings from the companies' points of view, and they hinge on the opportunities wireless provides.

Speaking at **MoffettNathanson**'s conference on Thursday, Comcast Corp. CFO *Jason Armstrong* said that of wireless, residential broadband and business services, wireless possesses the biggest sandbox the company can play in. Comcast still has room to grow since its share of the wireless market is smaller compared to the other two connectivity categories. While more focus on wireless may affect ARPU growth for sectors like broadband, Armstrong said his goal is to make decisions at the "convergence revenue layer" to help set up short- and long-term customer stability.

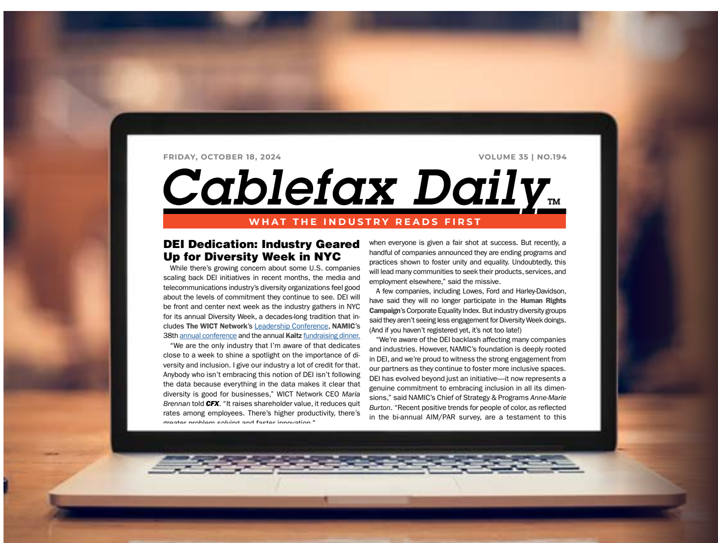
"Our economics in wireless are strong and we're firmly profitable, but then there's the decision on the back of that," Armstrong said. "Is this a standalone business that you're thinking purely about in revenue and EBITDA terms for the wireless business, or can you go reinvest and drive outsized growth, maybe accelerate your growth? That's the decision we've made this year. We're leaning in."

Armstrong's reading is that the wireless currently sits between being a tool to help retain broadband customers and functioning as its own growth engine. The economics, offloading and acquisition cost advantages give the wireless segment a strong financial foundation, enabling Comcast the option to attach Xfinity Mobile to broadband more aggressively and entice customers to think more holistically about their broadband plan. The company hopes its multi-faceted offerings will make it stand out in a competitive landscape that fueled a loss of 199,000 broadband subs in 1Q25.

"We've got vast majority of our customer base on five-year price locks, sort of in line with market-based pricing on broadband. We've got wireless much deeper into our base at substantially discounted rates to the wireless industry—a lot of people coming off of free lines rolling into either $20 or $40 [plans]," Armstrong said. "If the only rolloffs you have in the system are rolling off to rates that are a substantial discount to what the customer would have to pay otherwise, that's a pretty good place to be."

If simplicity is Comcast's mantra, Charter's is seamless. President/CEO *Chris Winfrey* aligned with Armstrong in pondering whether mobile could be treated as a separate product or a combined connectivity service that comes with usage on top of it through additional lines. While the opportunity is there for Charter, Winfrey thinks the jury is still out on how independent mobile can become.

"If you think about the mobile business, it's really an extension of wireline broadband, and it's a monetization of WiFi. Why do I say that? Because for us, 87% of the traffic that we have with Spectrum Mobile … goes over our network, whether WiFi or CBRS," Winfrey said at the conference. "That's not the most



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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

DEI Dedication: Industry Geared Up for Diversity Week in NYC

While there's growing concern about some U.S. companies scaling back DEI initiatives in recent months, the media and telecommunications industry's diversity organizations feel good about the levels of commitment they continue to see. DEI will be front and center next week as the industry gathers in NYC for its annual Diversity Week, a decades-long tradition that includes **The WICT Network**'s Leadership Conference, **NAMIC**'s 38th annual conference and the annual **Kaitz** fundraising dinner.

"We are the only industry that I'm aware of that dedicates close to a week to shine a spotlight on the importance of diversity and inclusion. I give our industry a lot of credit for that. Anybody who isn't embracing this notion of DEI isn't following the data because everything in the data makes it clear that diversity is good for businesses," WICT Network CEO *Maria Brennan* told ***CFX***. "It raises shareholder value, it reduces quit rates among employees. There's higher productivity, there's

when everyone is given a fair shot at success. But recently, a handful of companies announced they are ending programs and practices shown to foster unity and equality. Undoubtedly, this will lead many communities to seek their products, services, and employment elsewhere," said the missive.

A few companies, including Lowes, Ford and Harley-Davidson, have said they will no longer participate in the **Human Rights Campaign**'s Corporate Equality Index. But industry diversity groups said they aren't seeing less engagement for Diversity Week doings. (And if you haven't registered yet, it's not too late!)

"We're aware of the DEI backlash affecting many companies and industries. However, NAMIC's foundation is deeply rooted in DEI, and we're proud to witness the strong engagement from our partners as they continue to foster more inclusive spaces. DEI has evolved beyond just an initiative—it now represents a genuine commitment to embracing inclusion in all its dimensions," said NAMIC's Chief of Strategy & Programs *Anne-Marie Burton*. "Recent positive trends for people of color, as reflected in the bi-annual AIM/PAR survey, are a testament to this stunning part. The most stunning part is for the three national MNO or telco wireless companies, over 80% of their traffic goes over WiFi as well. So go back to what I just said—mobile is really just an extension or monetization of WiFi for the vast majority."

Winfrey credited wireless as blossoming into a catalyst in Charter's year-over-year growth potential for this year. That takes on a larger meaning considering the direction internet connectivity has gone.

"None of us are connecting our internet through a modem anymore. It's all wireless," Winfrey said. "When you leave your house and I ask you, 'Who's your provider?' as you're pulling out of the driveway, your answer is 'I don't know. I don't care. It needs to be fast and it needs to be continuous.' If that's what customers are looking for, we're the only provider who can do that 100% inside our wireline footprint, to have mobile everywhere we operate and combine those together with WiFi.

GOMEZ: IF I'M REMOVED, IT'S NOT BECAUSE I DIDN'T DO MY JOB

FCC Democratic Commissioner *Anna Gomez* continued her campaign of speaking out against what she has described as a weaponization of the Commission, but her speech at a **Media Institute** luncheon in D.C. Thursday was the first time we've heard her acknowledge that she might not hold on to the job. "I refuse to stay quiet while the government weaponizes its regulatory tools to undermine the First Amendment. This is how I'm using my voice. I encourage you to use yours too," she told the crowd of mainly lobbyists for communications companies and associations. "And if I'm removed from my seat on the Commission, let it be said plainly: It wasn't because I failed to do my job. It's because I insisted on doing it." Questions over whether *Trump* might remove Gomez have lingered since he fired the pair of Democratic commissioners at the **FTC** in mid-March. The Communications Act sets a quorum at the FCC of three commissioners. Her fellow Democratic Commissioner *Geoffrey Starks* has said he will be resigning from his seat this spring, a move that appears imminent. His legal advisor *Hannah Lepow* joined **NBCUniversal** this month as Senior Counsel, Regulatory Affairs and sat among those listening to Gomez's speech Thursday. Meanwhile, *Olivia Trusty*, Trump's Republican pick to fill an FCC seat, has cleared the Senate Commerce Committee and is awaiting confirmation by the Senate. Asked if she felt marginalized at the FCC, Gomez said she believes she's acting as prior minority commissioners have. "What concerns me, of course, is that a lot of the actions that are being taken are not being taken at the Commission level. They're all being taken at the bureau level, and that's probably for a good reason, because I don't think we would be voting to adopt a lot of what's happening right now," she said. This week, **Free State Foundation** President *Randolph May* penned a blog suggesting that Congress may need to consider altering the structure and functions of the FCC given that the Supreme Court may soon rule that FCC commissioners lawfully may be removed by the president without cause. "The Commission, in its current multimember form, would retain responsibility for conducting adjudications and enforcement proceedings in a manner insulated from executive branch control. These remaining functions should be carried out based on the law and evidence without political interference," Randolph wrote, suggesting FCC policymaking functions move to a single official located in the executive branch, perhaps in **NTIA**.

WHY SPIN VERSANT?

Comcast's move to spin some of its cable networks into a new, public company may have leadership and a name, but there's work left to be done before **Versant** becomes official by the end of 2025. CFO *Jason Armstrong* said at **MoffettNathanson**'s Media, Internet & Communications Conference on Thursday that things are on track pertaining to filings and the transition services agreements necessary. Comcast's decision seems to be resonating with others considering the heightened chatter that **Warner Bros. Discovery** may undergo a similar split. But for Comcast, its reason for restructuring derives from how it's structured as a company with six primary growth drivers where it has the ability to compete. Those make up 60% of Comcast's portfolio, and while the 60% is growing in the mid- to high-single-digits, the company is struggling to grow revenue of late. "Because [of] the other 40%, there's parts of that that are not growing revenue. So the question becomes: We've been very clear on the 60%. How do you think about the 40%?" Armstrong asked. "[Versant] was a part of the 40% that was separable, and when we say separable, it's is it feeding into Peacock in a way that you would say you probably can't separate this because you need to keep it. Only 2% of Peacock's content is coming from the channels that we're separating, so that's what sort of created the opportunity." From Versant's perspective, Armstrong thinks it can be a well-capitalized company with healthy free cash flow and the ability to make more investments in digital platforms.

MORE MLS GAMES TO XFINITY

Soccer fans still upset about the **MLS** walling off a majority of games behind an Apple-operated **MLS Season Pass** subscription will get to watch at least a few more matches for "free" this year—if they're **Comcast** Xfinity customers. Starting May 18, the weekly "Sunday Night Soccer" match, which initially

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aired exclusively for **Apple TV+** subs when it debuted in February, will be made available in the channel guide on **Xfinity X1** and the **Xfinity Stream** app, no MLS Season Pass or Apple TV+ sub required. This Sunday, MLS diehards will get to enjoy a special double-header: soccer superstar *Lionel Messi* and Inter Miami face off against Orlando City SC at 7pm, followed by a derby clash between the LA Galaxy and LAFC. Offering Sunday Night Soccer to Xfinity is the latest in a series of moves by Apple to expand the reach and audience base of its MLS subscription service. In January, Apple cut deals to offer MLS Season Pass to Xfinity and **DirecTV** customers. This came after last season's MLS Cup final averaged only 468,000 viewers on **Fox** and **Fox Deportes** broadcasts, a 47% drop from the 2023 final, with indications that streaming viewership on Apple TV was down as well, according to *The Athletic*. Currently, Fox Sports, **FS1** and Fox Deportes are the only linear networks simulcasting MLS matches, and only 34 of them this season.

TELEMUNDO SAYS YES TO BRAZIL

Telemundo and Brazilian media company **Globo** have signed a deal to co-produce new original films and scripted series for the linear network as well as its streaming platforms. While details on the new projects are TBA, the companies share a long history of collaboration, including on Spanish-language adaptations of hit Globo telenovelas such as the ambitious Morocco-set melodrama about cloning, 2010's "El Clon." Telemundo has also syndicated many of Globo's series, dubbing them in Spanish.

INDIANA FEVER SPREADS TO DTC

Indiana Fever fans can now watch their favorite **WNBA** team on **Fever Direct**, a new DTC streaming service powered by **Endeavor Streaming**. Viewers can access Fever Direct via their mobile devices as well as web browsers. Versions of the DTC product for CTV and Smart TVs are coming at a later date. Fever Direct, which is available within all currently approved Midwest markets, will carry 18 live games this upcoming season as well as full game replays. The launch comes just as the Fever also inked a deal with **TEGNA** to expand the team's footprint in 11 additional markets of the Midwest, including in star player *Caitlin Clark*'s home state of Iowa. The first live game streaming on Fever Direct will be on May 20 against the Atlanta Dream.

PARAMOUNT+ & PLUTO MOVIE NIGHTS

This summer, **Paramount+** and **Pluto TV** will once again bring free outdoor movie screenings to locations in New York City and Chicago. Films will include recent blockbusters—the new "Mission: Impossible," anyone?—as well as classics from the Paramount vault. As part of the screening series, Paramount+ will sponsor Bryant Park Movie Nights in Midtown Manhattan and BK Mag Movie Nights, which take place across four parks in Brooklyn. Pluto TV will also host activations promoting its offerings, with games and giveaways planned for attendees. The screenings kick off on June 9 and run through Aug. 28.

ION'S BIG PROGRAMMATIC PLAY

Scripps will bring **Freewheel**, the adtech platform owned by **Comcast**, to **ION**, a new partnership that aims to increase access to advertising opportunities across women's live sports programming on the network, including **WNBA** and **NWSL** content. Scripps says it saw more than two dozen new brands advertising across its sports programming last year and now it wants to attract even more brands by offering enhanced programmatic tools as well as expanding its women's sports footprint. Scripps' sports and entertainment network ION has already inked a few new sports media rights deals. And it's a good time for that investment: last year, the WNBA delivered its most watched regular season in 24 years, with ION averaging 670,000 viewers—up 133% from 2023. Seven of ION's WNBA telecasts averaged at least 1 million viewers last season. This year, ION is adding a competition show, the **Sports Illustrated Women's Games**, and the **Elevance Health Women's Fort Myers Tip Off** college basketball tournament to its growing portfolio of sports content.

DIRECTV'S EXTRA WNBA WITH ION

DirecTV will give its subs extra **WNBA** games from **Scripps Sports** by offering up additional WNBA telecasts drawn from the local Scripps broadcast stations from around the nation. In other words, DirecTV viewers won't be limited to WNBA games just on **ION**'s national service or in their local markets, receiving access to games airing on Scripps stations throughout the country. The league begins a new season of Friday night doubleheaders on ION tomorrow. DirecTV says the added games will as much as double the number of WNBA games available on Friday nights for all its residential and commercial customers.

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*
(05/05/25-05/11/25)

MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
TNT	0.999	3169
FNC	0.757	2401
ESPN	0.395	1253
MSNBC	0.274	868
HGTV	0.179	566
TBSC	0.145	460
CNN	0.142	450
HIST	0.132	418
TLC	0.126	400
INSP	0.124	393
USA	0.123	390
FOOD	0.117	370
DISC	0.113	357
HALL	0.111	350
TVLAND	0.107	340
TRUTV	0.103	327
LIFE	0.097	309
ID	0.090	285
GSN	0.089	284
HALLMYS	0.087	276
AMC	0.074	234
WETV	0.074	234
A&E	0.074	233
NAN	0.067	211
REELZ	0.066	211
BRAVO	0.065	208
FX	0.064	205
NWSMX	0.064	203
SYFY	0.061	194
NATGEO	0.060	189
OXY	0.058	183
PRMNT	0.052	164
ADSM	0.051	161
COM	0.048	153
BET	0.045	142
TRAVEL	0.044	141
SNDNCE	0.044	140
FETV	0.043	138
HLN	0.038	120
MLB	0.037	118
FRFM	0.037	116
LMN	0.037	116
MTV	0.036	115
FXX	0.036	113
E!	0.035	110
IFC TV	0.033	106
CNBC	0.033	104

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