

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

MVNO Movement: AT&T Quiet on T-Mobile's Business Deal

Those curious to hear AT&T's take on T-Mobile's MVNO play will have to wait. During AT&T's 2Q25 earnings call Wednesday, the operator didn't address news that T-Mobile [signed](#) a multi-year business MVNO deal with **Charter** and **Comcast** that'll launch in 2026—nor was it asked about it by investors during the Q&A session.

Considering the potential ramifications, that caught some, including **New Street Research**, by surprise. "We are shocked that this didn't come up on the call. We think it has the potential to be the most consequential event to come out of this earnings cycle by a very wide margin," the research firm wrote in a note.

While AT&T didn't bring it up, it's a good thing T-Mobile's 2Q25 call was on tap later Wednesday afternoon. T-Mobile President/CEO **Mike Sievert** said the deal bolsters growth in an area it has little exposure to today, also shifting more focus on "the exact areas that would drive incremental revenue."

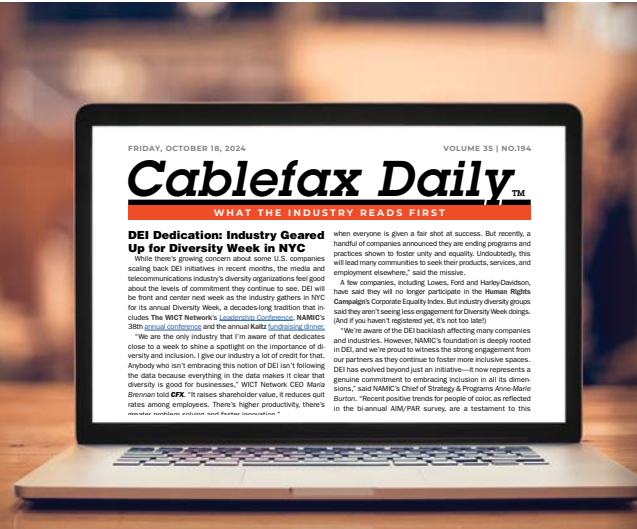
"Our strongest T-Mobile-branded growth comes on the one hand from the very smallest businesses transacting at retail, where we already compete with cable. And on the other hand, from large enterprises above 1,000 lines, which are not included in the deal," Sievert said. "While it's going to take some time for this to grow into something meaningful, I'm super excited about their capabilities to generate growth in the SMB sector in a way that will be truly incremental for T-Mobile."

T-Mobile's chess move will have implications on AT&T and Veri-

zon. "This MVNO was Verizon's to lose. Losing it puts the existing MVNO in question," NSR said, adding that the news signals a shift in leverage since Verizon's existing MVNO expires early next year. Another consequence for Verizon is Charter and Comcast now having an enticing converged solution for medium- and large-sized enterprise customers, thus diminishing Verizon's mobile share while making cable a stronger competitor for fixed wireless.

Evercore ISI doesn't think Verizon lost out on the business MVNO, nor does it think Verizon's consumer MVNO is in any danger. "That said, TMUS' preference to drive incremental value in its network through wholesale relationships with scaled competitors seemingly creates optionality for the cable operators with Verizon," Evercore said in a note. "For Verizon—the incumbent—to not expand its healthy and amicable wholesale relationship with the cable operators suggests to us that the terms were not attractive enough for the carrier, particularly in the context of its leading scale and current momentum with medium to large businesses."

There are two scenarios that could unfold in the longer term, according to NSR. The inconsequential route is that T-Mobile offers an MVNO focused on medium and large companies only, with no intention of competing with Verizon's MVNO that's consumer-centric. The more consequential outlook is T-Mobile becoming more of a player for the consumer MVNO, which might prompt AT&T to enter the bidding process (when it previously said it wouldn't). In that event, Verizon could "preemptively improve terms for cable to prevent losing the consumer MVNO." However, Sievert said during Wednesday's call that T-Mobile



HELP YOUR BRAND STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD WITH Cablefax Daily

PARTNER WITH US TODAY TO:

- » Send targeted eblasts to an engaged audience comprised of senior leaders
- » Advertise in our Daily newsletter, send to 43,000+ readers
- » Promote your brand
- » ...And MORE!

For more information, contact Amy Abbey at 410.979.0171 or aabbey@accessintel.com

wasn't interested in consumer "because the dynamics are different in terms of the incrementality in our math."

New Street predicts any of these outcomes will likely result in lower MVNO costs for cable. Cable also will get access to a new segment of the market that it wasn't able to gain momentum with before. "It also gives them a stronger suite of products that will help drive their share of their fixed products," NSR said. "T-Mobile is a strong partner for medium and large enterprises, given more pervasive 5G coverage on upper mid-band spectrum coupled with more capacity. Finally, the cable companies will gain leverage in the negotiations over the main MVNO which should at worst keep rates the same and potentially improve them."

FEDERAL COURT VACATES BROADCAST DUOPOLY RULE

NAB is celebrating the Eighth Circuit's decision to vacate key portions of the **FCC's** 2018 Quadrennial Review of broadcast ownership rules, including the Top Four prohibition or duopoly rule that prevents broadcasters from owning two of the top four highest-rated television stations in a single market. The court also found the FCC improperly tightened a rule around the Top Four prohibition that prevents a Top Four station from acquiring another Top Four station and circumventing the rules by moving the programming to a low-powered TV station or multicast stream. It's a nice win for broadcasters that are pushing for an overhaul of ownership rules, including a provision preventing them from owning stations that reach more than 39% of the national audience. It's important to note the 2018 review didn't happen until last year under then-Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel*, with the FCC voting to retain every existing regulation. Current FCC Chair *Brendan Carr* dissented from the decision. Carr applauded Wednesday's ruling and has opened a proceeding on the 39% cap. He's complained repeatedly that the agency's regulatory approach to broadcast is not in the public interest. Broadcasters didn't win on all fronts, with the federal court declining to address radio ownership restrictions, including the number of AM or FM stations a single owner can hold in a market. Here's the thing: the FCC is required by Congress to launch a Quadrennial Review of the regulations every four years, meaning it's past time for the 2022 review. Broadcasters are hoping when it comes, it will relax more rules. "FCC Chairman Brendan Carr has long been a champion for empowering local stations, and we look forward to working with this FCC to modernize its local radio ownership rules and ensure local broadcasters can thrive in the communities they serve across the nation," NAB said.

NEWSMAX ENTERS THE 39% OWNERSHIP CHAT AT THE FCC

While signs have been looking pretty positive for the relaxing of the **FCC's** 39% audience ownership cap for broadcasters, there's a new objector that's raising eyebrows. **Newsmax** submitted a strong opposition Wednesday to any move to eliminate or weaken the cap. This is particularly notable given founder/CEO *Chris Ruddy's* close relationship with President *Trump*. Just last month, word came that Trump was urging FCC Chair *Brendan Carr* to reach a deal with **EchoStar** on its wireless spectrum following a meeting with *Charlie Ergen* in which **DISH's** [favorable carriage of Newsmax](#) was reportedly brought up (and [some](#) have suggested Ruddy set up the meeting with Ergen). Newsmax is warning that tinkering with the 39% cap could hurt competition and diversity of voices, particularly with news and local programming. "If left-leaning broadcast networks like **CBS**, **ABC** and **NBC** acquired a high enough concentration of stations, networks would need fewer affiliates, the network/affiliate balance of power would be further eroded and networks would have even less incentive to produce programming that reflects the views of local audiences, granting executives in New York and Los Angeles the ability to dictate political and cultural views to audiences in heartland communities," said the [33-page FCC filing](#) signed by Ruddy himself. The conservative-leaning network argues that if broadcast networks or large station groups acquired more stations, they would increase their leverage over MVPDs. "Based on interactions with multiple distributors, Newsmax believes that **Fox Corporation**, for example, attempted to undermine Newsmax's distribution on pay-TV platforms in order to promote a competing service, the **Fox News Channel**," Newsmax claims, also noting that **Nexstar** appears to have used its broadcast stations for leverage of its cable net **NewsNation**. The news net also takes aim at the argument that local broadcasters provide specialized coverage, citing a report that found **Sinclair-owned** local stations across the country reading the identical editorial script from a centralized source. It also threw water on **NAB's** proposal to make the transition to ATSC 3.0 mandatory, saying it makes one wonder if broadcasters were allowed to consolidate whether "they would focus more on monetizing their spectrum to become a national wireless service providing a data pipeline, as opposed to investing in local news, weather, sports, emergency alerts and other relevant information." Newsmax got an early start, with comments on the FCC's ownership proceeding not due until Aug. 4. Pop the popcorn.

SKYDANCE PLEDGES TO FCC IT'LL CREATE OMBUDSMAN, CUT DEI

Skydance is next on the list of companies looking to score **FCC**

approval on a pending deal. The company wrote to agency Chairman *Brendan Carr* on Tuesday with a list of commitments ahead of its merger with **Paramount Global**. Of which included a promise to “ensure that the company’s array of news and entertainment programming embodies a diversity of viewpoints across the political and ideological spectrum, consistent with the varying perspectives of the viewing audience.” Skydance added that it’ll undergo a comprehensive review of **CBS** and will “make any necessary changes to ensure compliance” with operating in the public interest. To double down, it’s committing to having an ombudsman in place for at least two years and will report to the president of New Paramount. “In evaluating **Comcast**’s acquisition of **NBCUniversal**, the Commission found such a mechanism effective in preventing editorial bias in the operation of the NBC broadcast network,” Skydance said. In a separate letter, Skydance said it would eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives that were in place at Paramount. “Skydance, for its part, does not have DEI programs in place today and will not establish such initiatives,” it wrote. “... We understand that Paramount also eliminated or modified DEI programs across the company to ensure they are consistent with the company’s commitment to equal opportunity and governing law.” Its list of DEI-related pledges includes to “not engage in any DEI-related disparate treatment in hiring decisions and no longer will set numerical goals related to the race, ethnicity, sex or gender of job applicants or employee hires in the United States.” It’ll use a similar framework for internal promotions, while no longer considering DEI objectives in compensation plans. Additionally, Paramount won’t have minimum spend requirements for diverse suppliers, is removing DEI in public messaging and will no longer have an Office of Global Inclusion. Paramount and Skydance aren’t just looking to get in Carr’s good graces. The two had representatives meet with advisors for Commissioner *Anna Gomez* last week. In the meeting, according to an ex parte, Paramount and Skydance advocated that the *Ellison* family and **RedBird Capital** “represent fresh leadership,” adding that the merger wouldn’t reduce competition since Skydance nor RedBird have attributable interests in broadcast stations.

ROTH CONFIRMED AS NTIA CHIEF

Arielle Roth can officially say she’s **NTIA**’s Administrator. On Wednesday, the Senate voted 52-41 to confirm her as the agency’s new leader, succeeding *Alan Davidson*, who now leads Government Affairs for the data and AI firm **Databricks**. Roth was first nominated in early February, having been the Telecom Policy Director for Senate Commerce Chair *Ted Cruz* (R-TX). Her nomination comes at a key moment for NTIA’s \$42.5 billion BEAD program. The *Trump* administration revealed changes to the initiative last month, and on Tuesday, the added “Benefit of the Bargain” round [was opened](#). The statements of congratulations poured in, which isn’t surprising given the support she [received](#) during her five-and-a-half-month wait. “Arielle’s distinguished career in government—including time at the FCC and working in the Senate for Chairman Cruz—has given her the skills and

knowledge to lead NTIA at this critical time,” said **FCC** Chairman *Brendan Carr*. “After Congress passed President Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill, which restored the FCC’s spectrum auction authority, it has become even more important to have terrific leaders like Arielle at NTIA to help unlock more spectrum for consumer use. Arielle and her team will be critical in the work to restore U.S. leadership in wireless, which promotes our economic and national security. I look forward to working with her to deliver great results for the American people.” Others sending their well wishes included **ACA Connects**, **INCOMPAS**, **Fiber Broadband Association**, **USTelecom**, **NTCA** and **NCTA—The Internet & Television Association**. Cable giants **Charter** and **Comcast** chimed in as well with similar statements spotlighting spectrum policy and broadband deployment.

ESPN-NFL DEAL WATCH

Disney is [reportedly](#) looking to beef up **ESPN**’s DTC streaming offering further via the **NFL**. Per *The Athletic*, both parties are “inside the five-yard line” on a new media deal that would see the network buy **NFL Media**, which operates **NFL Network** and **RedZone**. This would mean that ESPN would not only get NFL Network’s 24/7 football programming but it could also secure the seven regular-season games that air on the channel through the deal, adding to the 25 games per season ESPN already has the rights to. ESPN previously secured the broadcast rights to its first Super Bowl, which will be simulcast with **ABC** in February 2027. When ESPN DTC launches this fall, the service will be priced at \$29.99/month for the unlimited tier, which includes all of ESPN’s linear networks and VOD. The addition of more NFL programming could sweeten the deal for customers on the fence, but it will likely cost Disney.

DIRECTV ADDS CLEO TO BUNDLE

DirectTV keeps beefing up its genre bundles. **CLEO TV**, targeting Millennial and Gen X women of color, will join the \$34.99/month MyEntertainment package tomorrow. The bundle already includes **Disney+**, the **Hulu** basic bundle, and **HBO Max** Basic with Ads, along with more than 55 channels.

PARAMOUNT’S SOUTH PARK DEAL

“South Park” will remain on **Comedy Central** for the next five years. Co-creators *Trey Parker* and *Matt Stone* signed a five-year overall deal to produce 50 new eps of the long-running animated series across five seasons. The duo also inked a separate five-year licensing deal, [reportedly](#) worth \$1.5 billion, that’ll make **Paramount+** the U.S. and international streaming home of the entire 26-season South Park library. That deal includes new episodes, which will become available on the streamer a day after their linear debut. Season 27 premieres this evening at 10pm on Comedy Central. South Park was previously streaming exclusively on **HBO Max**.