make your mind up time

There's a heavy emphasis on wireless data in the present issue. With revenues for voice in decline in most mature markets, the industry is still looking for those **elusive cocktails that will guarantee new revenues** in the short to medium term. The suggestion from a number of our contributors is that the solutions are staring us in the face. Few doubt that the corporate market will be central to the successful introduction of wireless data solutions. But getting your strategy right first time will be critical to gaining and sustaining market share. Is the enterprise market awaiting a 2.5G or 3G initiative?

Our industry leader q&a puts Sir Richard Branson to the test. After the last issue's analyst report on MVNO options and challenges, it's intriguing to hear how Virgin Mobile's founder is faring with his own version of the strategy. How can you enter an agreement with a partner that is your supplier, investor and competitor? In a typically candid interview, Sir Richard outlines the pressures as well as the competitive strengths of the MVNO proposition. Needless to say, **it's branding issues that take centre stage**.

And marketing issues are to the fore once again in our analyst piece devoted to **network sharing solutions**. For a while there's been a sense that, in the present economic climate, this particular strategy really ought to be considered something close to a necessary good. But nothing is straightforward in this business. For example, how to differentiate services and quality when you are working with the same kit? This is one solution that must be considered with a great deal of care.

"I think the operator community tends to be a bit mixed on the subject of MVNOs."

Sir Richard Branson, The Virgin Group page 02

Business connections

Lucent and Sierra Wireless have jointly demonstrated their forthcoming 3G connectivity solutions. Now entering commercial availability, the Sierra Wireless 1X AirCard 550 series and 1X Embedded Modules will provide seamless wireless internet connectivity to CDMA networks at speeds of up to 153.6Kbps. 'CDMA-based operators now have a tremendous range of wireless data service options,' said Andrew Seybold, editor-in-chief of the Forbes/Andrew Seybold Wireless Outlook. 'CDMA 1X services, being offered this year, put these operators at the forefront in offering high-speed wireless solutions to business customers. Add the potential for high bandwidth 1xEV-DO services in high traffic areas, and you have some truly exciting opportunities. With this development, Sierra Wireless and Lucent continue to demonstrate their leadership in the CDMA market.'

Winning strategies?

It's been suggested wireless gaming will be worth nearly US$17 billion a year – close to the value of the Hollywood movie industry. Don't believe the hype, says a new report from analysts Ovum. Consumers will be willing to pay only where they perceive value. This market will be worth US$4.3 billion by 2006, a fraction of the over-heated expectations. 'Market entrants must realise that wireless will not compete with consoles,' concludes analyst Rob Gear. 'Exploiting existing brands and communities by building games around them is the way for collecting revenues. A community sharing a special interest will be more eager to communicate with each other than randomly chosen users of non-branded games.' The report suggests wireless gaming will be a US$1 billion market by 2004.

3G deployed

Venezuelan operator Telecommunicaciones Movilnet CA and Lucent have announced a US$150 million agreement to build a new, nationwide 3G CDMA2000 wireless network to complement Movilnet's existing TDMA digital network. Movilnet will deploy CDMA2000 1X technology that will greatly increase the network's voice capacity and provide data speeds of up to 153Kbps – a nearly 10-fold increase from what is currently available. These enhanced transmission speeds will allow Movilnet to continue to launch innovative and advanced personal communication services, such as high-speed instant messaging, wireless Web browsing and email.