NEWS

UMTS in Germany

Lucent and T-Mobile have launched a joint pilot project to evaluate secure high-speed data services over UMTS. The pilot, which will involve enterprises in the Nuremberg region, will demonstrate how business customers can benefit from secure, high-speed data mobile services and integrated end-to-end enterprise applications. 'Lucent's solution offers us an ideal opportunity to further extend and enhance our present offer for business customers,' said Thomas Heilen, manager of product management for T-Mobile. This pilot network will leverage expertise gained from the development of the Lucent UMTS network at its facility in Nuremberg. Lucent will supply T-Mobile with its secure mobile data solutions for enterprises offer – a pre-integrated package of hardware and software designed to provide mobile office functionality for business users.

Earn and learn

In a recent report, equity firm Merrill Lynch spoke out in favour of Lucent's 3G strategy for the enterprise market. The report pointed to the value of an approach to 3G that focuses on the alternative philosophy of 'earn and learn' and not the old paradigm of 'build it and they will come'. Merrill Lynch analyst Tal Liani believes 'Lucent's strategy allows carriers to adapt networks through evolution rather than revolution. This can benefit carriers by reducing expenses and risk.'

Cisco partners

Lucent will integrate and resell Cisco packet data and media gateway products as part of Lucent's mobile networking product offer for the mobile service provider market. 'The combination of these Cisco packet data and media gateway products with Lucent's mobile wireless infrastructure solutions will help mobile operators deliver profitable, new mobile services and reduce operating expenses as they introduce IP into their mobile networks,' said Dan Scheinman, senior vice president, Corporate Development for Cisco.

"The biggest mindset challenge for wireless industry players centres on a recognition that platforms cut across industry boundaries. That's the power of networks. They transcend traditional boundaries and challenge the competitive landscape."

Professor N Venkatraman, page 28

EDITORIAL

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

The current issue of *3G Solutions for Operators* is published to coincide with Europe's biggest wireless industry event – the 3GSM World Congress in Cannes. Given the uncertain political and economic climate, it's a fair bet the show will find operator delegates hard-nosed and strategic rather than gung-ho and expansive. Prime considerations will relate to maintaining and gaining market share and improving data solutions and revenues. And riding over the top of such objectives will be the quest for differentiation in increasingly competitive regional markets.

A key theme from this issue's writers is that the most effective way of stealing a march on the competition is to get to market first with a compelling high-speed data solution. The consensus is that the only way to accomplish this is to prove the business case for UMTS as a matter of urgency and then roll out a well-targeted product. With this in mind, the results of advanced UMTS pilot projects currently in place across Europe are likely to be the big news in the months ahead.

Selling mobile data solutions to enterprise customers requires a significant shift in mindset from both operators and vendors. An in-depth look at the field force demands of major maintenance and contracting firm Downer Connect reveals a company with a dauntingly sophisticated appreciation of both the technology and the economics of such a solution. At the top of this company's agenda was the search for a secure transport mechanism for a customised dispatch application.

Echoing the conclusions of the Downer case history, an intriguing report from Boston University's School of Management makes it clear that accessing IT budgets is a very different ballgame to providing handsets and voice packages to telecom managers.

Players clearly need to be mindful of the evolving demands of their customers and the shifting boundaries of the competitive landscape.

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