Going Local: The TM Forum's Regional Events
by Tim Young

With their annual TMW (TM Forum Management World), TM Forum is responsible for what is arguably one of the finest and most focused shows for the OSS/BSS market. The TMW-Americas show, formerly in Dallas but moving to Orlando for 2008, is also a quality event for CSPs and OSS/BSS vendors. However, many may not be aware of regional events put forward by the TM Forum to take advantage of growing markets in other geographic areas, as well.

Coming up in March, the TMF will be offering Management World Middle East in Dubai, followed by Management World India in New Delhi.

The Dubai event, entitled "Delivering Winning Solutions for Service Operations" will take place March 3-5 at Le Meridien. The New Delhi event will take place March 31- April 3 at that city's Le Meridien, and is entitled "Delivering Innovation and Excellence for Service Operations."

We spoke to Suzy Mayhew, Head of Events for the TMF, to get a better feel for what these events have in store for vendors and service providers alike, and how they fit into a landscape already saturated with trade shows and regional showcases.

First and foremost, we wanted to understand how the events differ from TMW-Nice and the Americas show in terms of content, attendance, and scope. "These events have been researched and developed to focus on the specific current and upcoming issues facing the Middle East and India, respectively," Mayhew replied. "Service providers in these two dynamic markets face different concerns, in some ways, to other parts of the world." Indeed, the concerns of areas that traditionally may not possess the same infrastructure as Western Europe or North America are quite different. A look at other articles in this issue will underscore the difference in approach to technologies like WiMAX as a viable replacement for absent last-mile access technologies in parts of the developing world. That's just the tip of the iceberg.

However, there are some aspects of doing business in the telecom world that are similar no matter where you go. "[CSPs] also need to remain competitive through optimal and efficient operations, sustain innovation, explore new business models

and partnerships whilst looking to provide new services," says Mayhew.

In structure, the regional events are considerably more compact than the larger events, as well. "Management World Middle East is a 1-day (3 March), plenary session event with two days of training courses from TM Forum Training," says Mayhew. "Management World India is a 2-day, (2-3 April) plenary session event, with training courses from TM Forum Training taking place on the 31 March-1 April."

The attendance expectations are considerably more modest, as well. "These events will attract between 200-300 attendees, mainly from the Middle East region and India," said Mayhew. "The last event for the Middle East held by the TM Forum attracted 170 attendees, in March 2006 and last year's Management World India (March 2007) attracted 370 registrations."

"The programs incorporate a number of local service providers, giving an update on their latest initiatives and planned activities," says Mayhew. "There are also a number of service providers from other parts of the world and major industry players, specifically addressing the areas of immediate and more pressing concern within the Middle East and India.

The larger TMW shows have included an expanded focus on content, with the 07 Dallas show introducing the multi-million dollar 'Content Encounter' installation. Mayhew says that the regional events will include the same expanded focus.

In terms of job title, Mayhew expects 35% executives at the C and VP level, as well as 22% managers, 16% architects/engineer/IT professionals, 16% marketing personnel, 5% analysts and consultants and 6% others.

In terms of sector, the breakdown is 30-40% CSPs, 30-35% vendors, 25-30% systems integrators, and 15-20% other. This is similar, Mayhew says, to the TMF's other events.

Speakers for the Dubai event include :

Martin Creaner, TM Forum – chairing and presenting on TM Forum Strategies and Role for the 21C

- Mohamed Rabie El Sheikh, Mobile Telecommunications Company

- Abdiqadir Ibrahim Yusef, Etisalat UAE

- Marcus Becker, Deutsche Telekom AG

Plus speakers from: Wipro Technologies, Vodafone D2, PSI Transcom GmbH, TME Consulting, Capgemini Telecom & Media, Oracle Corporation, Telcordia Technologies, Clarity International Ltd, PT Telkom Indonesia, AT&T, Subex Azure, SabaFon Yemen, Intec Telecom Systems PLC and BearingPoint.

The India event promises:

Keith Willetts, Chairman & CEO, TM Forum (and conference Chair)

- Mr R.N. Padakone, Department of Telecom, Government of India
- Sumit Chowdhury, Reliance
- Ananda Subbiah, Hewlett-Packard
- T.R. Anand, Satyam Computer Services Ltd.
- Subash Menon, Subex Azure Ltd.

    Plus speakers from: VSNL International, Deutsche Telekom AG, OSS Observer, IIT Madras, Tech Mahindra, Telcordia Technologies, Tata Teleservices Ltd, NetCracker Technology, Infosys Technologies Ltd, Siemens AG, Wipro Technologies, Square Hoop Ltd, IBM, Oracle Corporation, Tata Consultancy Services

These events are designed as places for interaction and discussion, with expo floors limited to fewer than 10 display areas and plenty of interaction between presenters and attendees.

That focus is necessary. These events have great potential as regional complements to the major, worldwide events. They're clearly not intended to be competitors for the major events, and we've found that attendees from all over tend to show up at both major events, showing that traditional regional preferences are not as strong as they once were. The Americas event is about as likely to feature companies from EMEA or AsiaPac as the TMW- Nice event, though the latter is positioned as a more worldwide show.

Still, small, focused events have their place in the market. Mayhew told us that these events will be the precursors to several more in the next few years. "Further events are planned for Africa, SE Asia and South America and possibly also for Central and Eastern Europe through 2008 and 2009."

Information on both events can be found on the events page of the TM Forum site, at www.tmforum.org/events.

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