

TIA 2011: Inside the Network

Taly Walsh, Vice President for Networking at the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) previews the 'Inside the Network' event being held in Dallas, May 17-20



Telecommunications Industry Association Vice President, Marketing and Business Development, Taly Walsh

The Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) represents the global information and communications technology (ICT) industry through standards development, advocacy, tradeshow, business opportunities, market intelligence and worldwide environmental regulatory analysis. Since 1924, TIA has been enhancing the business environment for broadband, mobile wireless, information technology, networks, cable, satellite and unified communications. Members' products and services empower communications in every industry and market, including healthcare, education, security, public safety, transportation, government, the military, the environment and entertainment.

TIA is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

Taly Walsh joined TIA as Vice President of Marketing and Business Development in January 2008.

Walsh brings more than 20 years' experience in association and tradeshow marketing, strategic branding and positioning, web development, technology, and public and membership relations. She was previously Senior Vice President for Marketing and Membership at InfoComm International, an association representing the audiovisual industry. Before that, Walsh led the marketing for CardTech/SecurTech, a tradeshow for biometrics and security industries, and for Public Technology, Inc., an association advancing research and technology in local and state government. Walsh has also been a small business owner in the graphics and publishing sector.

Walsh works to reinforce and enhance TIA's leadership position in the information and communications technology industry by promoting the association's efforts to provide its membership appropriate platforms for standards setting, government affairs, market intelligence, business development and environmental compliance. Walsh also heads the association's membership services activities.

Q: What's the background to the event?

A: We had been co-owners of SUPERCOMM but last year we cancelled the event. Nonetheless we felt that we still needed an event to ensure that our industry had a gathering place around the topics that were crucial to TIA members. We talked about it with our members in terms of what their needs are. We decided that we needed a theme that is vital to our industry as well as a rallying point, and we chose 'Inside the Network'.

Q: Why that in particular?

A: From a strategic as well as a technical perspective, there are many questions that our industry needs answers to in terms of the future of the network. These issues include the demands that are

- being placed on the network right now through the advance of the Cloud, mobile devices, regulatory issues, lack of spectrum, various market access challenges as well as the security and reliability and sustainability of the network in the next five to ten years. By calling it 'Inside the Network', it has been a real rallying point for everybody.

Q: How does establishing that theme translate into action and events on the floor at TIA 2011?

A: What we are doing is really looking at the issue of the network from a variety of different perspectives. If you look at our website at www.tia2011.org, the various tracks relate to the future of the network with issues like security, smart grids, end-to-end wireless and wireline converged networks and Cloud. There are facets of these topics that suppliers and service providers are grappling with right now that we are covering.

Q: What are the mechanisms in place to ensure that these can be discussed? What are you doing to make sure that the key decision makers are attracted to the event?

A: We think that we are quite different in the fact that we have a format that is unique. Not only are we doing a live event for four days but we are also starting a complementary Digital Marketplace online, prior to the live TIA 2011 event. That is a way for us to capture video content, webinars and keynote speakers online, as well as streaming content while we are there at the event. We will host a TV studio on the exhibit floor that will stream interviews and other content live. This Digital Marketplace will be running pre-, during and post-event. People can visit the site, ask questions, make connections, and then come to the event prepared. We are also setting up opportunities for networking through our business matchmaking service. We expect carriers and utilities to attend to meet up with the suppliers that they need to plan their next moves with.

Q: What has been your strategy for inviting keynote speakers?

A: Relying on the relationships TIA has built as an association, we're able to bring in some of the heavy hitters like the chairman and CEO of AT&T, the President of Windstream Corporation and the CTO of Verizon. We are doing that very strategically from the perspective of who people need to hear from and specifically around the topic of the future of the network. We are also working very closely with a number of different associations to ensure that we are coming together as an industry to address the issues.

Q: Can you give me an example of one of those organisations?

A: There is an organisation here called the National Rural Electric Co-operative Association (NRECA) addressing Smart Grid issues.

Smart Grid funding is available in the U.S. and there are various different Smart Grid initiatives out there. The event is in Texas, which is one of the major recipients of funding for smart grids. You will also hear from utilities, such as Centerpoint Energy and Central Indiana Power, as well as the Executive director of the NRECA. We are also ensuring that the policy and legislative aspects are being addressed by collocating TIA's annual Spring Policy Summit, TIA 2011, in Dallas. Important topics such as spectrum, innovation and security infrastructure are being covered from a policy perspective and those are also part of the keynote addresses that will include the Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski.

Q: What makes the TIA event different from all the other exhibitions out there?

A: It was always intended to be small event, primarily a meeting. That is the deliberate difference between our event and why we call it an event rather than tradeshow because the intention was not to develop yet another big tradeshow, it is more a gathering for industry. We are a first time event, but we have nonetheless have been able to garner the attention of some heavy hitters; Alcatel Lucent came on in September as our host sponsor followed by Nokia Siemens Networks. That was because they believed that we needed to have a TIA membership event and annual meeting around the topics which really gathered their attention. Other companies like Ericsson, Juniper Networks, Fujitsu, GENBAND, Walker and Associates and Intel will also be there as well as some smaller companies, many of whom are from the Texas region. Others will be coming in from Silicon Valley to exhibit in the TIA/Telecom Council Innovation Showcase.

Because TIA is a standards developing organization, TIA 2011 will also host standards meetings that bring engineers from the industry together. We are collocating some of our standards committee meetings at TIA 2011 including one on smart device communications. The event is really devised as a way for the industry to come together and talk about business, standards and policy and of course to network.

Q: How many visitors are you expecting?

A: Early on we set a goal of about 3000 in all, not a big trade show but something more intimate, a gathering of TIA's membership and the ICT industry.

For more information visit:

www.tiaonline.org or
www.tia2011.org