

Getting Involved in the Wireless Industry

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I have been involved in the wireless industry since the late 90's and have become a wireless junkie over the years, not a junkie of gadgets, products, gossip, but of the industry as a whole. If you are reading this, you are somehow involved in this industry; directly or indirectly and need to understand that our Industry provides us all with a job, financial support, self-worth and career path. Yes, this industry does have its financial ups and downs, scares and celebrations as do any other industry, but the key is this is OUR industry and we, collectively, need to understand it and get involved to make a positive impact on the future of the wireless. With that, all of us in this crazy world of wireless should take some steps to become more involved to learn, network, grow and be aware of the past events, present situations and future projections.

Industry awareness will allow an employer or employee, carrier or vendor make more educated career or business decisions. Taking time to review trends and explore market projections, meet people with face-to-face networking opportunities and researching emerging technologies all can aid anyone in basic industry awareness and knowledge about the strength or areas of need in wireless.

Getting involved in wireless is a simple step and if done properly, will not be a time burden. There are multiple associations that are promoting, educating and assisting our industry; some at a cost and other are free. Investigating a few of these associations will shed some light onto the pros and cons of each type of organization and assist in choosing the most effective one for the issues each individual is looking to tackle or is frustrated with.

The second vehicle to assist in building involvement is taking a few minutes to read. There are multiple publications that available to all of us; from the tower climber to the carrier or the lawyer to the engineer. These publications are both available in print or electronically and are usually free.

The last item is to create the habit to get involved. Making smart goals, adhering to these goals and reviewing your progress are crucial in establishing the habit. If this goal of getting involved is important and attainable, success is the only option.

Industry organizations

As stated, there are a host of associations that are specific to wireless, each with its own goal or mission. The key is to take some effort to review the goals and missions and compare it to your position and goals, current or desired, and choose the one that is most fitting. While in the process of choosing and association to get involved in, please make the decision based on the time you can dedicate your



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passion and expertise. Being honest with yourself in these three areas will make your decision a success for you and the association. Also consider that a goal of networking is a viable goal, but you need to contribute as well. Networking is a two way street, you need to meet people, but in most cases someone else might benefit by meeting you. So please keep an open mind when networking.

Below is a list of a few associations that have been established for a few years, some since the beginning of the industry and all have made great strides for the industry.

SWAP, State Wireless Associations Program, <http://www.swapprogram.net/>

The State Wireless Association Program (SWAP) promotes the wireless industry and raises technology awareness at the state and local level. Individual associations are created under the SWAP umbrella to develop a local presence for the wireless industry within the community. It is vital to the continued growth of the industry that there is a single force addressing local issues and responsibilities. Working together under SWAP, companies can cultivate and develop positive relationships between the wireless industry and the community leadership. In addition, the Association serves to create and nurture the relationships among the members of the wireless industry.

The State Wireless Association welcomes anyone involved in the wireless industry including, but not limited to, carriers, tower companies, vendors, services organizations, law firms, title companies, environmental companies, construction companies, network consultants, engineering firms, individual site acquisition agents.

PCIA, <http://www.pcia.com/>

PCIA supports the infrastructure necessary to make wireless communications and information available at all times and places.

PCIA advocates sound public policy for the industry, educates decision makers about its needs and the importance of wireless infrastructure, and provides a forum for industry information and best practices.

CTIA, <http://www.ctia.org/>

CTIA-The Wireless Association[®], is an international nonprofit membership organization founded in 1984, representing all sectors of wireless communications – cellular, personal communication services and enhanced specialized mobile radio.

As an organization, we represent service providers, manufacturers, wireless data and internet companies, as well as other contributors to the wireless universe. CTIA advocates on their behalf before the Executive Branch, the Federal Communications Commission, Congress, and state regulatory and legislative bodies



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Rural Cellular Association, <http://www.rca-usa.org/>

RCA will continue to be a viable organization by providing educational and networking opportunities, lobbying on behalf of its stakeholders and ensuring the longevity of the association through sustainable financial performance.

RCA will be the leading organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in rural America through wireless communications.

NATE, www.natehome.com

The National Association of Tower Erectors (NATE) is a non-profit trade association providing a unified voice for tower erection, maintenance and service companies. NATE is headquartered in Watertown, South Dakota with a staff of seven people who administer to the day-to-day operation of the association. As a member driven association, NATE is directed by its Board of Directors and committees. These individuals come from all types and sizes of companies located throughout the United States.

Enterprise Wireless Alliance, <http://www.ita-relay.com/>

The Enterprise Wireless Alliance (EWA), formerly ITA and AMTA, works to preserve spectrum rights and access for enterprise wireless customers. As the national advocacy and service organization for enterprise wireless licensees, providers and manufacturers, EWA represents its membership on all matters pertaining to national telecommunications policy before the Commission, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the Office of Management and Budget, the House and Senate Commerce Committees, and the Congressional Budget Office.

These are the more established associations in our industry and all should be taken in to consideration. One would not expect to join all these associations, but attend a show, panel discussion or networking event. Each event there is opportunities to learn, meet and do business. One needs to consider that you have to exert some efforts at these events and organizations. One will not become suddenly an industry expert or meet the CEO of Verizon, but just “showing up.” Strategic networking, research, goal setting, involvement and effort will pay off or set the stage for success.

Information Available

With the use of the internet, our industry is “dialed in.” The information is out there, one just needs to take a few minutes to find it and more importantly read it! We can find out when new handsets are being introduced, what CEO was just hired or fired, who just partnered with what OEM, if there was a job site injury or death, what new products have been introduced and so on. This can happen by just surfing the web or by picking up one of our superior trade publications.



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One can subscribe to a handful of online or print publications by browsing to the following links;

- www.wirelessweek.com/
- www.rcrwireless.com
- www.agl-mag.com
- www.wirelessestimator.com
- www.natehome.com/TowerTimes/Index.cfm
- www.freetrademagazines.com/wireless-telecommunications-magazines/ (subscribe to a multitude)

I would suggest a quick review all of these and find one or two that best fits your position in the industry and is most appealing then subscribe. Try to pick a certain time of the day to read these publications and make it a habit. These publications will cover a broad range of topics, but will enlighten you to other aspects of the industry and hopefully help in future decision making.

Financials

Another important area that might require research and invaluable information is the financial sector of the big players in the wireless industry. The financial position of one of the major players will most certainly have an effect on all of us; from the OEM to the smallest of contractors. One example of a negative financial position is; one of the carriers is having a difficult quarter in making Wall Street happy which adversely could result in a drop in this company's price per share. The drop in the share price will result in the carrier making choices to improve that price. For example, they might pull back spending and hold the capital budget, or stop building to improve the financial status. This action could help that carrier report stronger cash on hand and "improve" their image to the Street. Conversely, this will have a negative impact on all other players in the industry by not spending, the rest of wireless is not receiving Purchase Orders. Hopefully the stock price increases and then the budget is released again. While the budget is pulled back, the entire industry could be put in a holding pattern, waiting for the "build" to start again. This situation usually creates the following concerns; do I lay off, do I cut back travel, do I explore other industries, when will they build again, etc...

By delving into the financials of the carriers, tower companies, OEM's, program management companies and engineering companies could shed some light on the financial strength of the industry and help guide a company in the decision making process.

A few links that could aid you in seeking this financial information can be found at;

1. [http://stocks.rcrwireless.com/crain?Account=rcrwireless& Match=Page& Match=Ticker&Ticker=\\$PRNRCR&Page=Quote](http://stocks.rcrwireless.com/crain?Account=rcrwireless& Match=Page& Match=Ticker&Ticker=$PRNRCR&Page=Quote)
2. www.yahoo.com Click on the financial tab and you can create a personal portfolio to track that companies that directly impact your business.
3. Annual reports also have a great deal of information that will express goals, issues and plans for these publically traded companies.
4. Or you can choose any financial site that you might already familiar with.



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The importance of all getting involved is to learn more about the industry, an industry that supports you, your family and affects your future. You should take some of the information provided and attempt to pursue a few avenues, hopefully, to be better informed and assist with future decisions. Be safe and thank you for the continued support. Involvement, awareness, seeking knowledge and creating the habit will help you embrace, grow and positively impact YOUR wireless industry.