

## Wireless for the Here and Now



By David McCartney, Wavecom We in the wireless business have traditionally focused our efforts on the development and introduction of new, bleeding-edge technologies. Our priority has always been enabling the latest feature, smallest size or "killer" application. Well . . . those were the good old days! Today &#151 and for the foreseeable future &#151 we must be prepared to examine the 'value proposition' of our respective technology and product offerings. Market conditions are forcing us to prove where and how we add value early and often. We must demonstrate value starting with investors, working right through the development process to customer fulfillment. In this challenging environment, we must consider not only the process of bringing advanced technology (i.e. features, functionality and size) to market, but also the specific points where value, perceived and real, can be added to that process.

With over a quarter century in the wireless industry, I have long ascribed to the belief that value always resides at the front-end, the place where technology is discovered and developed into commercial products and features. From bits to bytes, chipsets to operating systems, Java to Brew, we have not discriminated. Both start-ups and established companies have marched to this belief.

That was then. Now the focus is shifting. While bleeding-edge technology is still needed, today's sweet spot is being positioned as a provider of solutions. These new 'value solutions' are driven by our customers' need to expedite their Time-to-Market (TTM) or Time-to-Revenue (TTR). These pressures, coupled with the industry's weathering of severe resource reductions and asset focusing, mean that our historical emphasis on pure technology invention is a thing of the past. A new focal point is developing on the value chain, with integration and end-user issues as the "golden rings".

This shift is prompting renewed emphasis on strategic partnerships. We have all experienced way too many 'Barney' partnerships, those formed for marketing reasons that made us feel good but that never actually contributed to customer satisfaction or revenue. Why? Customers like OEMs are now relying on these partnerships to deliver critical elements that support activities from product

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development to operations. Very simply, it's leverage, ROI and TTM.

So where do we go from here? OEMs of today and tomorrow are focused on their core competencies: brand, distribution channels, user interface (MMI), etc. Rather than reinventing the wheel, these companies will drive the trend toward outsourcing, which now includes not only manufacturing, but also design and fulfillment. As this shift continues, customer and OEM investment will center on the integration of their strategic partners' products and services, not invention. This change will evolve over time, with newer industry players stepping up as the early adopters.

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