



# Member focus...

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**At the SCTE we take great pride in our individual members, who have made such a contribution to the growth and development of our industry. This is a new section of Broadband Journal and we'll be shining an overdue light on you wonderful people in every issue going forward, as well as regularly online.**

## ***What got you interested in a career in this industry and how did you get started?***

As a child aviation enthusiast, you end up learning about RF communication at its basic level. In Arizona, there was plenty of open space for my hobby; I constructed various RF enabled planes and gliders which inevitably crashed. It turned out that Arizona was a hotbed of manufacturing for the cable industry. A school friend of mine, Brandon Wilson, was a rising star at local company PCT International in 2000 when I was living in Phoenix.

PCT was quite internationally focused and I naturally gravitated to that part of the business; within a year or so we had moved back to Europe to work full time on managing and growing the distribution network for the PCT product line. The cable industry was exploding globally at that time and it seemed that any company that could build decent equipment was experiencing rapid growth.

By the end of 2003 we had set up a network of active European distributors and launched the PCT products into the European market. It was a decent success.

## ***You've had a varied career in lots of locations, and have a lot of strings to your bow. How would you best describe what you do, and what do you enjoy best?***

Being very aware of what creates value in a technology deal; that includes the people side. Smaller companies rely mainly on trust and aligning the commercial interests transacting deals. To a certain extent this has meant the cable industry became reputational in nature. That is one big part. Another is that to really succeed in higher levels of the cable, or any

industry for that matter, there is a high level of technical and commercial ability that's needed to understand how it works. Or at least that was true in the past. That's a long way of saying that you can't fully separate the people from the technology.

It sounds like a jump, the move from high level sales to high level procurement, but it wasn't really that difficult because I essentially saw the two jobs as the same: "Can we (the team) land this technology implementation on budget at a fair market price and deliver on the expectations being set?" The answer has been yes – most of the time.

## ***What memories really stand out for you over the years you've been involved in this industry?***

The first year I came to the London Olympia show, the after-show party was inside the Natural History Museum; as an American new to the UK, I was pretty wowed by that. I have to say the industry dinners over the years have created some incredible benchmark moments for me. I'm sure I'm not alone there.

I have challenged myself with presentations a couple of times: in 2017 I gave a 20 minute talk in Spanish at the Cable Conference in Cartagena in Colombia, to an audience of over 200 people. That really had my adrenalin pumping. This year I presented a technical paper on remote OLT technology, luckily in English this time, but with the same amount of fear and adrenalin.

The day that the other owners of Asheridge Communications and I signed the papers to sell to Teleste Corporation, April 6th 2013.

### ***The sector has changed a lot in 50 years; what for you is the biggest shift?***

It feels important to say that I can only account for the last 25 years or so, haha.

Perhaps the biggest shift of the last 25 years is that a high speed internet connection at home went from being a luxury to a necessity. This fact has altered the equation in terms of government involvement on both sides of the Atlantic, and in fact we now realise that broadband access has a important net effect on society in the form of digital equality.

I think it became clear about 10 years ago that analogue laser technology was reaching some limitations. We were doing a lot of head-end work back then; operators were running out of space. The smartphone revolution was just getting going around and data consumption was set to explode. The architecture needed to evolve to support the amount of data.

I would also add I welcome the more recent to shift to work on inclusivity and more business awareness around social and environmental issues. Telecoms is a big global contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and think our industry can do a lot better on power consumption and spectral efficiency. There is a lot of innovation happening in this space.

### ***What do you get out of being a member of the SCTE®? What would you like to see more of?***

This one I need to start by saying that I am a proud member of both of the UK and the US SCTE organisations. Previously I have also been a member of the SCTE Executive Committee and remain a very engaged individual FSCTE member.

As I have gone through my career, I have needed different things at different times. At times it was education, support, contacts, friendships. What is very cool is that there is a large number of highly-talented individuals who gather around a common cause; you can feel the passion and you can move mountains.

Ultimately though broadband skills change over time, we all need to think of ways to stay relevant and useful to the industry that is evolving. For sure the big operators of the future that will probably have a blended network of DOCSIS, xPON, and FWA. How do we prepare ourselves for that? That's a real challenge to be overcome. The cable industry has got a lot of things right. Cable will influence fibre in many ways both on the pure technical and also the methodology side. Both SCTE

societies have always had a role in shaping the standards discussion and benchmarking best practice where signal management is concerned. I'd love to see more cooperation on the international stage.

The gala dinners have always been 10/10!

### ***What's the single biggest impact that AI will have on the streaming/broadcast industry?***

I am no expert on this! However I have seen the places in the network where this kind of technology is useful.

My guess is that the gains will be around how we analyse and understand the vast amounts of data that our networks and businesses generate. Being better able to predict the network traffic patterns will mean we can be more efficient. These are valuable insights if you put them to use correctly.

### ***How do you see the streaming industry developing over the next 5 years?***

A couple of things are clear; television is undergoing a pretty fundamental shift. Netflix and on-demand online content has killed off most of the premium channel pricing power that cable used to have.

On the other hand COVID-19 showed that connectivity in the home and on the move is what we need and expect. And it had better be seamless. Security will become more important as online threats proliferate and evolve.

### ***Have you had any mentors over the course of your career and how did they help you?***

I was very lucky to have a few great mentors; you learn something from every kind of boss!

I should thank Steve Youtsey for hiring me into the industry, on his staff was an incredible guy, Mr. Doug Macleod. Doug was a veteran whom I admired and he was also an incredible teacher and mentor. He was instrumental in giving me a fundamental understanding of DOCSIS. Being able to talk confidently about decibels was necessary at the time.

Another great mentor was Barry Reavill, he was the Managing Director for us at Asheridge Communications. He was a great supporter and ultimately he was the backbone of the team that enabled us to grow the company and sell it to Teleste. There were a lot of robust discussions but we always got great



decisions out of it. I learnt a lot watching this guy operate. He retired soon after we sold – we still talk! I should also call out Neville Koeiman – he took a chance on me and taught me a great deal. I was lucky to learn from some of the best.

## ***What would you tell a young entrant just about to get started in this industry?***

Let me open this one by turning this around; I spend my time trying to learn from the new entrants getting started! Why? They are digital natives, and fully living in a digital existence. They have better skills regarding presentation and data analytics.

One of the great things about working at Liberty Global was being exposed to young entrants getting started through their graduate programme. Again I was lucky enough to have one or two grads on my team. It's nice to see when they do well and continue in the telecoms space. The advice is still the same:

Good people are never out of a job for long in this business. To be good at this you will never stop learning new things. Make friends.

## ***What is the best thing about this sector?***

Definitely the best thing is the long-term relationships that you develop after many years. Being friends with people who share your passion for business/technology, it's pretty fun if you ask me.

Reflecting on my own 20+ years in the transatlantic cable sector, I think there is a lot to be proud of. Our industry has been great for investors and consumers, and it succeeded by constantly innovating against strong competitors and rolling out better products. These skills are still highly relevant in today's world too!

For consumers – they just want things to work when they should. They largely don't care whether it's DOCSIS, xPON, WIFI, as long it works when they need it! We make it happen.



**Are you an individual member of the SCTE? Would you like to be featured in Broadband Journal?**  
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