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## Wireless Industry Consolidation: Are You Ready?

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When following the wireless industry, one is cognizant of the never-ending churn; services, companies, rate plans. Current examples are: (1) the pending ATTW and T-Mobile merger, (2) Sprint's many issues with its investment in 4G Wi-Max provider Clearwire, (3) industry movement to 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) technology, thereby antiquating current equipment, and (4) resellers positioning for the mergers and growth of their larger facilities-based competition.

Now more than ever before, effectively managing wireless services, voice and data plan costs, equipment, texting and roaming is a critical and challenging task for all businesses. Some challenges for your business might be:

- **Situation:**
  - Industry Consolidation: Impact of the ATT Wireless/T-Mobile and/or the Sprint and Clearwire mergers
  - Devices: Trying to satisfy enterprise demands for iPhones, iPads, Droids, etc, while managing unexpired plans
  - Optimization: Perpetually attempting to maintain the most cost-effective wireless configurations

Wherever *chaos and confusion exist*, opportunity thrives. By using precise telecom sourcing tools and industry expertise, your company can be positioned to pro-actively manage its wireless supplier(s) and not simply react to the new merged wireless company's "plan of the month". Inherently, wireless services, which are not always sourced as competitively as fixed services, continue exponentially growing, with unintentional complexity as a by-product. As such, this non-static spend category mandates your ongoing attention to detail. Are any of the following happening in your company?

- **Challenges:**
  - Ensuring right-sized plans and equipment with your supplier(s)
  - Using aggregator/reseller versus direct carrier

- If you are a T-Mobile customer, are you prepared to not merely “hand over” your volume to the “new” ATT at merger? Don’t be “rushed” to convert to ATT, without sourcing your volumes effectively
- All T-Mobile equipment will become incompatible
- 4G Evolution Facts:
  - ATT: Moving from GSM/HSPA+ to LTE
  - T-Mobile: Upgrading from HSPA+21+ to HSPA+42; no 4G LTE investment in the US
  - VZW: Currently offering LTE in a number of cities as an alternative to 3G CDMA
  - Sprint: Continues offering both CDMA 3G and 4G Wi-Max, directly and via Clearwire. Is contemplating moving towards LTE, abandoning Wi-Max!
- **Solutions:**
  - Using industry expertise and e-sourcing tools, you should:
    - Verify best plans available; incumbent et al
    - Develop a cogent wireless policy with approval processes, centralized invoicing and equipment standardization
    - Ensure highest discounts, to include texting, overages, roaming, etc.
    - Consolidate to no more than two (2) vendors; eliminate leakage
    - Acquire conversion funding from any new supplier
    - Confirm quantity of current 2G, 3G, 4G plans and devices
    - Fight for the continuation of unlimited data plans (both ATT and T-Mobile, possibly even VZW, are trying to move away from this offering)

Your company must be prepared to deal with the impacts of newer technology and the merger/consolidation of key wireless providers. Complexity survives.

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