CTIA Announces 2014 'Super Show'

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This article has been updated to include CTIA's response to CCA's criticisms of the 2014 show dates.

CTIA today announced plans to merge its spring and fall shows, creating what the association is referring to as a “super” mobile industry trade show.

Beginning in 2014, CTIA will combine the best of its CTIA Wireless show, which is focused on technology and consumer electronics and its recently rebranded fall show, MobileCON, with an emphasis on mobile IT solutions. The result will be a larger mobile show that will take place Sept. 9, 10 & 11 at the Sands Expo Convention Center in Las Vegas.

Rob Mesirow, vice president and show director for CTIA, said in an interview with Wireless Week that the association had been researching possible changes to its shows for the past two years. He said the new show will bring together other "strategic shows and partners" from the wireless industry and complinetary verticals.

"This is going to be a dramatic shift, and it's intended to completely reorganize the new, emerging wireless ecosystem in one place," Mesirow said, adding that the timing was key, placing the show in the early second half of the year where there's not much else happening.

Mesirow said CTIA will continue to host CTIA 2013 and MobileCON 2013 separately, while incorporating super show programs as a springboard to the changes in 2014. In 2014, MobileCON will be a "show within a show," with separate registration and hosted in a ballroom at the Sands.

The MobileCON 2013 show is scheduled for October 9-11 in San Jose, CA. As scheduled, CTIA 2013 will take place May 21-23 at the Sands Expo Convention Center in Las Vegas.

Mesirow said the major carriers were enthusastic about the changes. In a statement, Fared Adib, senior vice president of product development and operations for Sprint, said the industry "needed a trade show where we can showcase our offerings and capabilities, from consumer to healthcare to the connected home, at one place."

There was one group that wasn't very happy with CTIA's timing for its event. The Competitive Cellular Association (CCA), formerly the Rural Cellular Assocation, suggested that CTIA's timing for its new show couldn't have been worse, as it overlaps with the CCA's annual convention.

Eric Graham, senior vice president of strategic relations at C Spire, which is a member of the CCA, said in a statement that it was "either an incredible coincidence that CTIA scheduled an event 20 months from now on top of CCA's Annual Convention, or it is CTIA finally admitting, like its two largest members, that it cannot beat its competition on the merits."

Graham went on to call the wireless industry "duopoly-dominated," saying that CTIA's timing for its 2014 show was "rooted in the same mentality that drove C Spire to leave that organization three years ago."

"Now that CTIA has adopted AT&T and Verizon's tactics, everyone should accept that the three are actually one in the same, despite whatever small carrier window-dressing they dream up to present to the public," Graham said.

Mesirow said that due to the size of the CTIA show there were few venues that could accomodate the event. He said the association chose its 2014 dates by working with its members, exhibitors and the Las Vegas Sands Expo Convention Center.

"This date was coordinated very carefully with our partners, which we will be announcing over the next few weeks and months," Mesirow said in a statement.

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