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## COMCAST EXECS: VERIZON DEAL TO BRING THE 'QUADRUPLE PLAY'

By **Andrew Couts** — December 6, 2011

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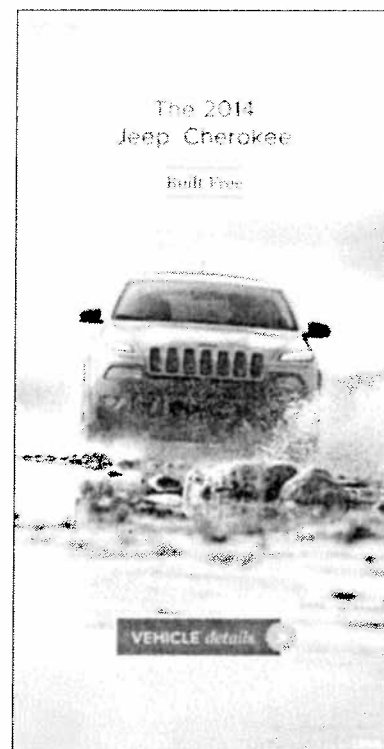


Late last week, Verizon Wireless signed a deal to purchase 122 spectrum licenses from SpectrumCo, a joint venture between Comcast, Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks, for \$3.6 billion. As part of the deal, which awaits approval from the Federal Communications Commission, the Comcast will now be able to sell Verizon Wireless service as part of their communications packages.

To the casual observer, this might not sound particularly significant — in fact, it will likely prove to be one of the most consequential partnerships in the US communications industry. And Comcast executives agree.

"Talk about content, you got NBC. And wireless, you got this. In perpetuity," said Comcast CFO Michael Angelakis during the UBS Global Media and Communications Conference, as quoted by Variety. "This is a deal forever. We don't have to invest in building a wireless network. We aren't going to acquire a wireless network. It's quite a significant transaction."

If you're a Comcast customer, this means that you will eventually be able to purchase cable television, internet service, home phone service, and cell phone service, all through your cable company. It also means special deals if you buy into the the "quadruple play" option; and you'll eventually be able to watch live TV on your Verizon smartphone, then resume watching on your television. This and other "great new innovations" will result from this partnership, Comcast Cable president Neil Smit told the group of investors at the UBS conference.



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For Verizon wireless customers, it means great access to a faster and faster 4G LTE network, which will come as a result of the spectrum buy.

In essence, this deal is a merger without any companies actually merging. It is a substantial condensation of power in the communications industry. And while this may indeed lead to innovation for these companies, it also means other companies will either have to make partnerships of their own, or risk falling behind. And anytime that happens, it's bad for customers.

[Image via EDHAR/Shutterstock]

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by Andrew Coutts

Features Editor for Digital Trends, Andrew Coutts covers a wide swath of consumer technology topics, with particular focus on the intersection of technology, law, politics, and policy. Prior to Digital Trends, Coutts served as associate editor of TheWeek.com, executive editor of COEDMagazine.com, assistant editor of Maxim magazine, and winter editorial assistant of Stuff magazine. In his few moments spent away from a computer, Coutts can be found hiking with his dog, or blasting around on motorcycles. Tips & pitches: acoutts@digitaltrends.com

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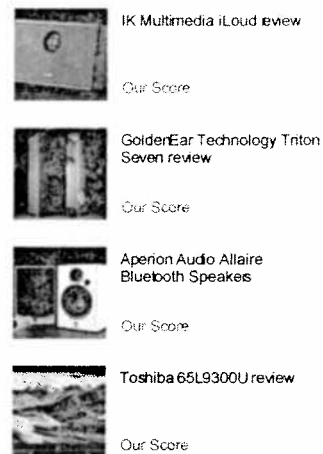
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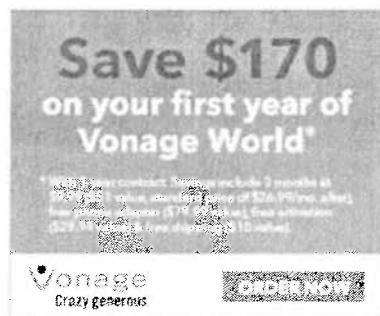
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News Release

### *Verizon Wireless And Comcast Team Up In Western Massachusetts To Deliver Great Video Entertainment, Communications And Internet Experiences*

Offers and Incentives Bring New and Existing Customers More Value, Convenience and Choice

For customer inquiries, please call 800-922-0204 or go to [Contact Us](#)

November 14, 2012

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SPRINGFIELD, MA — Verizon Wireless and Comcast today announced they will sell each other's services in Western Massachusetts and deliver a variety of offers and incentives for new and existing customers. Now, consumers in communities along the Interstate 91 corridor, from Springfield north to Bernardston, looking to stay connected to the people and things they love while on the go or at home have new options for outstanding video, phone, Internet and wireless services.

Qualified customers of both Comcast and Verizon Wireless could be eligible for a variety of offers and incentives, including Visa® prepaid cards valued up to \$300, a Comcast HD DVR at no additional cost for

six months, and/or a complimentary 12-month upgrade to Blast!, the Xfinity Internet service that provides download speeds of up to 50 Mbps.

"Mobility is a top priority for today's consumer," commented Christine Berberich, New England President for Verizon Wireless. "With Comcast, we've wrapped leading wireless, entertainment and communications services into one offering. At home and on the go, customers can expect a great experience when Comcast's product suite is combined with the Verizon Wireless 4G LTE network."

"Together with Verizon Wireless, we're delivering more value for more consumers by providing an entertainment and communications solution that aligns with their increasingly mobile lifestyles," said Mary McLaughlin, Senior Vice President for Comcast's Western New England Region, which includes Western Massachusetts. "For decades, Comcast has invested in building a national network that makes our data, voice and TV services widely available. Today, we're taking that a step further by giving our customers the flexibility of a great in-home experience with our Xfinity services, along with the reliability of Verizon Wireless' network while on the go."

In addition to Western Massachusetts, Comcast and Verizon Wireless are extending these offers to several cities across California, Connecticut, Florida, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia. Verizon Wireless and Comcast have previously introduced offers in other cities in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah and Washington.

Consumers can order Verizon Wireless plans and devices through Comcast by calling (855) 704-7400. More details, including availability and eligibility, can be found at [www.comcast.com/vzw](http://www.comcast.com/vzw). Eligible consumers also have the flexibility to purchase these services at select Verizon Wireless Communications stores. Additional details can be found at [www.verizonwireless.com/xfinity](http://www.verizonwireless.com/xfinity).

For customers who wish to sign up in person, these packages are available at the following retail locations in Western Massachusetts:

Verizon Wireless, Holyoke Mall, 50 Holyoke Street, Holyoke, MA  
Store Hours: Mon – Sat: 9:00 AM to 9:30 PM; Sun: 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Verizon Wireless, 1420 Boston Road, Springfield, MA  
Store Hours: Mon – Sat: 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM; Sun: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Verizon Wireless, 1123 Riverdale Street, West Springfield, MA  
Store Hours: Mon – Sat: 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM; Sun: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

### **About Verizon Wireless**

Verizon Wireless operates the nation's largest 4G LTE network and largest, most reliable 3G network. The company serves nearly 96 million retail customers, including 90.4 million retail postpaid customers. Headquartered in Basking Ridge, N.J., with more than 75,000 employees nationwide, Verizon Wireless is a joint venture of Verizon Communications (NYSE, NASDAQ: VZ) and Vodafone (LSE, NASDAQ: VOD). For more information, visit [www.verizonwireless.com](http://www.verizonwireless.com). To preview and request broadcast-quality video footage and high-resolution stills of Verizon Wireless operations, log on to the Verizon Wireless Multimedia Library at [www.verizonwireless.com/multimedia](http://www.verizonwireless.com/multimedia).

### **About Comcast Cable**

Comcast Corporation (NASDAQ: CMCSA, CMCSK) ([www.comcast.com](http://www.comcast.com)) is one of the nation's leading providers of entertainment, information and communications products and services. Comcast is principally involved in the operation of cable systems through Comcast Cable and in the development, production and distribution of entertainment, news, sports and other content for global audiences through NBCUniversal. Comcast Cable is one of the nation's largest video, high-speed Internet and phone providers to residential and business customers. Comcast is the majority owner and manager of NBCUniversal, which owns and operates entertainment and news cable networks, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, local television station groups, television production operations, a major motion picture company and theme parks.

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## The Curious Joint Marketing Offer by Comcast and Verizon Wireless

OPINIONS » THE CURIOUS JOINT MARKETING OFFER BY COMCAST AND VERIZON WIRELESS



### Author

Herve Uttheza, Analyst Emeritus

### Date

September 18, 2012

It is not often that we comment or predict on an industry on the basis of a simple marketing flyer. Never say "never"!

A few weeks ago, I received a curious marketing mailing, child of the unlikely alliance of two corporate giants better known for their fierce rivalry than their mutual good will and benevolence: Comcast (Xfinity) and Verizon (Wireless). The mailing is listed below.

Get \$10 off your Comcast bill every month for 1 year.  
Exclusive offer only available by phone.

**SAVE \$120!**  
\$10 AS EXACT AS 1, 2, 3...

Call 1.866.605.0946 to activate a new Verizon Wireless service or a new smartphone on a 2-year plan or upgrade your existing account.

Start saving \$10 on your Comcast bill every month for 1 year.

Offer great savings and amazing entertainment.

In this offer, the marketing and sales teams of the two corporate giants decide to bury the hatchet and offer a \$120 rebate to a Comcast customer who signs-up to a Verizon Wireless two-year contract. It was hardly a coincidence that the rebate was announced just a few weeks before the new iPhone 5 was to be released to the market.

With 22 million Comcast video subscribers and 108 million Verizon Wireless users[1], it is easy to imagine that the overlap of the two user bases is fairly extensive. In fact, assuming that Verizon's 37% share of the 290 million US wireless user base[2] is extensible to Comcast's video subscriber universe,

that means about eight million Comcast video subs are also Verizon wireless subscribers. To provide some perspective, eight million paying subs is:

- Equal to two-thirds of all TimeWarner Cable's subscribers.
- Twice the number of Cox Communications cable subs.
- 2.5 times the number of Cablevision's subs.
- One fourth the number of Netflix's subs.
- Twice the size of Verizon FiOS television subscriber count.
- Equal to AT&T telco + Verizon IPTV counts.
- One fourth of all US satellite TV subscribers.

Such numbers speak louder than simple corporate greed. I contend that this "partnership" is but a natural repositioning of the battle lines between the two companies (if they can be called "battle lines").

- The marketing teams at Comcast and Verizon Wireless have realized something essential to the structure of the US television and wireless industries: crossing over turned out to be more difficult than expected, so "if you can't beat them, join them."
- Verizon remains coherent in its decision to stop investing further in its own TV venture, as its CEO Lowell McAdam announced last December at the UBS Conference.[3]
- Cable is trying to pump up the value of the wireless spectrum it sold last December to Verizon Wireless for \$3.6 billion,[4] and co-marketing was at the core of the deal's terms.
- The two companies had already incorporated a marketing cooperation clause in this spectrum sale, hinting that one day the Comcast Xfinity mobile services would be showcased on a Verizon Wireless device.

Hence, I wonder if this pricing and marketing alliance might lead to a deeper collaboration in which the Comcast and Verizon Wireless teams work more closely and share marketing knowledge gained from the results of this offer.

In an age when television MVPDs are trying to reinvent themselves—when "second screen experiences" on tablets and mobile are moving beyond novelty and spurring timid experimentation from broadcasters and advertisers alike—this marketing move by Comcast and Verizon Wireless may pay dividends far beyond reselling wireless service.

In my view, these eight million cohabitants are at the "eye of the interactive television hurricane" that includes second-screen experiences, connected televisions, and social TV; and constitute the battleground where new TV experiences will be tested and defined. In fact, I strongly believe this marketing deal holds the seeds of a major tectonic shift in how the battle for the television will be fought. Consider the following:

- If the experiment is successful, and 15% of the target audience responds positively to this marketing mailing and ditches AT&T for its notoriously poor service quality at the time of a new iPhone launch, Verizon Wireless could add more than one million users. Consumer reaction to the marketing bundles will certainly drive the outcome.
- It could signal a re-alignment of how Cable sees Telco. If this experiment is successful, expect more innovation and cooperation across the "Berlin wall" of traditional Cable and Telco battle lines.
- And, of course, if this marketing cooperation is successful, AT&T will not only lose customers; it may also see its position in the new world of synchronized TV and second-screen experiences eroded.

Maybe we are indeed seeing the first signs of the end of the Cold War between the two camps. In a strange twist of fate, Apple and its new iPhone may end up as the unwilling catalyst of these new market developments, bringing yesterday's archrivals together in unholy alliances never thought possible.

Time will tell.

[1]<http://news.verizonwireless.com/news/2012/04/pr2012-04-16c.html>

[2]<http://www22.verizon.com/investor/industryoverview.htm>

[3][http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-tech/post/verizon-ends-satellite-deal-fios-expansion-as-it-partners-with-cable/2011/12/08/gIQAAGANrFO\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-tech/post/verizon-ends-satellite-deal-fios-expansion-as-it-partners-with-cable/2011/12/08/gIQAAGANrFO_blog.html)

[4]<http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/12/02/verizon-wireless-buys-spectrum-from-comcast-and-others-for-3-6-billion/>