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 **SATELLITE**
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Executive Summaries of Market Trends and Opportunities in Key Market Segments and Regions Worldwide



Innovations in Satellite Services

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by Virgil Labrador

An innovative company is combining the reliability and global reach of satellite distribution with the versatility of Cloud-based services

I started my career over 20 years ago working in marketing and sales for the first all-digital satellite teleport in Asia. It was very exciting times when satellite television was revolutionizing broadcasting and we were at the forefront of the innovative technological changes transforming the industry. The industry has turned over several times since then, but the spirit of innovation has carried on to this day.

One company that we have been watching carefully over the years which exemplifies this spirit of innovation is iKO Media Group (iKONG). iKONG is an end-to-end media service partner for broadcasters and content owners. The company provides tailor-made solutions to a wide range of global and local networks. A full spectrum of services is available, including satellite broadcasting, automated, high-capacity playout management, Cloud services, EPG creation, disaster recovery solutions, channel monitoring feed, OTT platforms, fiber and IP delivery, and more.

iKONG believes in being forward-thinking, agile, and holistic. This approach allows iKONG to deliver effective solutions customized to specific budgets and requirements without compromising on the quality of service. iKONG is committed to operating its business to create value

for all stakeholders. The company's sustainability strategy focuses on social, environmental, and economic responsibility.

In an era marked by rapid technological evolution and shifting consumer behaviors, iKONG has distinguished itself through a visionary approach that synergizes the reliability and global reach of satellite distribution with the versatility and innovation of cloud-based services. This strategic positioning not only reflects the company's deep-rooted industry know-how but also its forward-thinking ethos, aiming to revolutionize the broadcasting landscape. The partnerships with Cognacq-Jay Image and the launch of eCLUTCH with Eutelsat are emblematic of iKONG's journey towards redefining media distribution, offering unparalleled advantages to TV channels and satellite operators alike.

Merger with STN

A pivotal moment in iKONG's journey was the announcement of its merger with STN, a Slovenia-based teleport, at the IBC show in Amsterdam in September 2023. STN is a well-established, forward-thinking global teleport facility, firmly placed at the cutting edge of satellite, broadcast, connectivity, and co-location services. Based in Slovenia, the heart of Europe provides a strategic loca-

tion that presents a wide visible arc of 120 degrees, allowing easy access to all major satellites' orbital positions.

This strategic move has proven to be a resounding success, with the integration processes for the commercial, financial, and operation departments already finalized. The seamless transition to unified systems and workflows underscores the merger's effectiveness, bolstering iKONG's operational efficiency and market reach. The merger has not only enhanced iKONG's capabilities but also solidified its position as a formidable player in the global broadcasting and media distribution landscape according to David Treadway, Chairman of the Board of iKONG.

Strategic Partnerships: Paving the Road to Success

The recent strategic cooperation with Cognacq-Jay Image highlights iKONG's commitment to elevating sports broadcasting through innovative technologies. This partnership enables the delivery of live sports content with unparalleled quality and reliability, leveraging iKONG's satellite capacity and Cognacq-Jay Image's cutting-edge broadcast solutions. It's a testament to iKONG's pursuit of excellence and its ability to collaborate with industry leaders to enhance service offerings.

Moreover, the launch of eCLUTCH eSports TV, in collaboration with Eutelsat, marks a significant milestone in iKONG's journey. This initiative transcends traditional broadcasting paradigms by introducing a satellite-powered hybrid model for eSports and gaming content across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. It underscores iKONG's innovative spirit and its role in expanding the reach of digital content through strategic satellite integration, catering to nearly one billion gaming enthusiasts globally.

Differentiation Through Agility and Bespoke Services

What sets iKONG apart from competitors is its agility and a deep understanding of the value of providing a full spectrum of services. From satellite transmission to comprehensive OTT and cloud solutions, iKONG offers tailored services that cater to the unique needs of each client. This customer-centric approach, characterized by flexibility and fair pricing, distinguishes iKONG in a market often dominated by one-size-fits-all solutions.

Looking ahead, iKONG is committed to a five-year strategy aimed at becoming the industry leader by introducing productions and solutions unparalleled by its competitors. This ambitious vision reflects iKONG's dedication to innovation, quality, and customer satisfaction, ensuring its continued growth and success in the dynamic media distribution sector.

Revolutionizing Viewer Engagement and Broadcasting Innovation

Over the past year, iKONG has significantly enhanced its offerings, embracing OTT platforms, EPG, and



monitoring among other value-added services, thereby reinforcing its commitment to innovation and meeting the diverse needs of its clientele. A standout initiative has been the integration of dynamic QR codes into broadcasts, revolutionizing viewer engagement by offering a seamless interface between traditional viewing and digital interactivity. These QR codes allow viewers to dive deeper into the content, providing a gateway to a range of actions like accessing in-depth information, making direct bookings from lifestyle shows, or engaging with communities in meaningful ways. By merging reliable satellite distribution with the flexibility of cloud-based solutions and enriching viewer interactions, iKONG is not merely keeping pace with evolving industry trends but is actively redefining standards of excellence and innovation within the broadcasting landscape, shaping the future of media consumption.

Recently, just before the NAB show in Las Vegas this year, iKONG

re-launched its iKOVIEW service offering, supercharged with unmatched precision, comprehensive performance metrics, advanced network grading, and an unwavering focus on Secure Reliable Transport (SRT) flows. iKOVIEW, powered by Alvalinks, symbolizes the pinnacle of broadcasting innovation.

Confronting the industry's perennial challenges such as network disruptions, quality degradation, and latency, iKONG harnesses the capabilities of Alvalinks' Cloudrider platform. This strategic collaboration not only guarantees the real-time verification of SRT network feeds but also ensures swift identification and resolution of network issues, bolstering effective management and stellar service levels.

Leveraging Alvalinks technology, iKONG offers an unparalleled glimpse into video networks via the Cloudrider web interface. This initiative provides broadcasters with a system view of over 500 SRT stream

David Treadway, Chairman of the Board, iKO Media Group

Last year you announced a merger with STN, the teleport based in Slovenia. How has that worked out so far?

The merger is going very well with integration processes already finalized within the commercial, financial and operation departments when both companies already working on the same systems and with the same workflows. This strategic move has proven to be a resounding success, with the integration processes for the commercial, financial, and operation departments already finalized. The seamless transition to unified systems and workflows underscores the merger's effectiveness, bolstering iKOMG's operational efficiency and market reach. The merger has not only enhanced iKOMG's capabilities but also solidified its position as a formidable player in the global broadcasting and media distribution landscape.

How do you see your merged company positioned in the key markets and applications that you are focusing on?

The merged company is much stronger and has the abilities to keep on growing a pursue the Tier 1 Broadcasters business. The strategic merger between iKOMG and STN has significantly fortified the unified company's market position, endowing it with enhanced capabilities and resources. This consolidation has not only streamlined operations and unified workflows but also expanded the technological and logistical bandwidth of the company. As a result, the merged entity is now in a more robust position to address the complex needs of Tier 1 Broadcasters. With a comprehensive suite of services that spans from traditional satellite distribution to innovative cloud-based solutions and a customer-centric approach to service delivery, the company is well-equipped to meet the high standards and diverse requirements of premier broadcasting clients. This strength, combined with the agility to adapt to rapidly



David Treadway

changing market dynamics and viewer preferences, positions the merged company as a formidable competitor in the global broadcasting landscape, capable of sustained growth and expansion in the pursuit of Tier 1 Broadcasters business.

What differentiates you from other companies providing similar services?

We are agile and we understand the value of providing a full array of services to our customers from satellite transmission to full OTT and Cloud solutions. We are also known for our ability to offer bespoke services to clients at fair prices rather than deliver a one-size fits all client model.

Can you cite an example of how you were able to meet one of your client's requirements?

All customers today are looking to find ways to reduce their costs and become more efficient. We just signed with a new customer only because we offered

them to combine IP with satellite in a very flexible business model.

How do you see your company going forward?

We have a five-year strategy to become the industry leader with productions and solutions that none of our competitors are offering.

Our strategic roadmap for the next five years is meticulously crafted to position us at the pinnacle of the industry, focusing on the development and deployment of innovative productions and solutions unparalleled in the current market. This ambitious strategy is underpinned by a commitment to continuous research and development, leveraging cutting-edge technologies, and fostering partnerships that enhance our service offerings.

Anything else you want to add?

From the outset, our strategy and vision were grounded in a potent combination of our extensive satellite distribution know-how and the integration of cutting-edge cloud-based services, aiming to redefine the broadcasting landscape. Thanks to the unwavering dedication and hard work of our exceptional team, this vision has transitioned from ambitious plans to tangible reality, demonstrating



View a video interview with David Treadway at the IBC 2023 where he announced the merger with STN and spoke of the merged company's plans moving forward:

<https://www.satellitemarkets.com/people/interview-iko-mg-chairman-board-david-treadway>

“...our strategy and vision were grounded in a potent combination of our extensive satellite distribution know-how and the integration of cutting-edge cloud-based service...”

our capacity to innovate and lead in a competitive market. Buoyed by this success, we are now poised to elevate our aspirations even further.



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flows, enabling advanced observability and analytics, thorough path exploration, and immediate problem detection. The technology demystifies complex network infrastructures, streamlining operations and enhancing efficiency.

“Alvalinks’ Cloudrider will help us meet our service level agreements and ensuring the reliability of our feed delivery. With its observability and monitoring platform, we’ve enhanced SRT network reliability, isolated faults, and reduced resolution times, empowering iKO Media Group to expand its top-notch 24/7 delivery services,” said Sharon Malkiel, Head of Cloud Services at iKO Media Group.

“iKONG’s established market approach and extensive reach, coupled with their reputation as one of the most robust and diverse service providers in the global broadcast industry, were pivotal factors in Alvalinks’ decision to collaborate with them. Together, we set to revolutionize the way video networks are monitored and ensure unmatched performance for broadcasters worldwide,” said Gabriel Kerner, CEO of AlvaLinks.

“With iKOVIEW now leveraging AlvaLinks technology, broadcasters are equipped with the most advanced tools for ensuring smooth video delivery and exceptional viewing experiences. This partnership between iKONG and AlvaLinks goes beyond product enhancement; it sets a new global standard for broadcasting excellence, affirming our dedication to driving the industry forward and empowering broadcasters worldwide to succeed in the digital era,” added Kerner.

Advantages for TV Channels and Satellite Operators

“...What sets iKONG apart from its competitors is its agility and a deep understanding of the value of providing a full spectrum of services...”


iKONG’s unique blend of satellite distribution and cloud-based services presents significant advantages for TV channels and satellite operators. For TV channels, this integration offers a seamless, reliable, and scalable solution for content delivery, enabling them to reach wider audiences, including in remote and underserved areas. The flexibility of cloud-based services further allows for rapid adaptation to changing viewer demands and emerging content trends.

Satellite operators partnering with iKONG benefit from the company’s comprehensive understanding of broadcasting needs and its ability to deliver tailor-made solutions. This partnership not only extends the operators’ service capabilities but also opens new avenues for growth by tapping into the expanding market of cloud-based broadcasting services.

Conclusion

iKONG’s vision of melding satellite distribution know-how with

cloud-based services is not just a strategic move; it’s a transformative journey that positions the company as a pioneer in the broadcasting industry. Through strategic partnerships and innovative launches, iKONG demonstrates its commitment to driving the future of media distribution, offering compelling advantages to TV channels and satellite operators. The company’s roadmap to success is paved with the ambition to continuously explore and integrate emerging technologies, ensuring that it remains at the cutting edge of delivering exceptional viewer experiences worldwide.

It is certainly a company worth watching. For more information on iKONG and its various offerings go to www.ikong.com 



Virgil Labrador is the Editor-in-Chief of Los Angeles, California-based Satellite Markets and Research which publishes a web portal on the satellite industry www.satellitemarkets.com, the monthly Satellite Executive Briefing magazine and occasional industry reports called MarketBriefs. Virgil is one of the few trade journalists who has a proven track record working in the commercial satellite industry. He worked as a senior executive for a teleport in Singapore, the Asia Broadcast Center, then-owned by the US broadcasting company CBS. He has co-authored two books on the history of satellite communications and satellite technology. He holds a Master’s in Communications Management from the University of Southern California (USC). He can be reached at virgil@satellitemarkets.com



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