

# Think Globally, Act Locally

Tellabs' PartnerPlus program provides local expertise and support for operators worldwide.

BY JOAN ENGBRETSON

**N**etwork modernization is a worldwide phenomenon, with operators looking beyond their own borders for equipment solutions—albeit with a wary eye. These operators want assurance that the equipment will work as required, and that they will get the support they need in planning, deploying and maintaining that infrastructure.

To meet those needs, Tellabs works with local partners around the world. Based in the network operator's own region—often in the same country—these partners help Tellabs ensure that customers get the support they need in a timely and professional manner.

Tellabs has worked with some of its local partners for years. Recently, however, the company created the PartnerPlus Program with the goal of enhancing those relationships, helping establish new ones and ultimately enhance the customer's experience with the partner organizations.

"PartnerPlus aligns Tellabs resources and support to leverage the local partner's

strategic value to the partnership and to our network operator clients," said Joe Shilgalis, vice president of channel partners for Tellabs.

## SELECTIVE ADMISSION

Tellabs chooses partners selectively, looking for companies that have a strong understanding of telecom technology and strong relationships with local network operators.

"We look for a company that has a technical sales team and is willing to provide pre- and post-sale technical services," Shilgalis said. "They also should have a portfolio of complementary services to help provide an end-to-end solution for the network operator. We don't flood a market with partners."

Instead, Tellabs partners are treated as extensions of the company's sales and support team and are provided with a range of resources to help them in that role.

Two partners that recently worked with Tellabs to win and execute key projects are Switzerland-based Miracom and STG, which has offices in four Central American countries and engineers in a

fifth. Both companies illustrate how the PartnerPlus program works and what it can help partners achieve.

## MIRACOM: "WE'RE FASTER" **mira**com

Founded in 1988, Miracom has a strong track record in managing infrastructure deployment projects on behalf of network operator clients.

"We have installed millions of dollars of equipment without a single delay that caused us to pay a penalty and without ever failing to meet a customer's specifications for capacity or functionality," said Hans Peter Naegeli, CEO.

Miracom has handled multiple projects for one major European network operator, which recently enlisted Miracom's help with a deployment aimed at increasing the capacity of the transport network. That network, for the operator's wireless GSM service, had seen traffic boom as a result of customers' heavy use of hand-held devices.

One reason why that operator often uses Miracom for such projects, rather than handling it internally, is that "we're



Innovative  
Technologies.  
Innovative  
Relationships.

faster,” Naegeli said. Miracom often advises the operator about new technology and is sometimes asked to recommend equipment for a particular project.

Miracom has worked with Tellabs on other deployments and recommended the Tellabs® 8600 Managed Edge System for the wireless transport network upgrade for a variety of technical and business reasons. One consideration was the product’s ability to support ATM, helping to preserve the operator’s investment in that technology.

Miracom also found Tellabs more flexible than other suppliers in meeting the operator’s business requirements. For example, Miracom and Tellabs were able to devise a pricing approach based on total cost of ownership in order to meet customers’ contractual needs.

Miracom and Tellabs also have established partner relationships with each other at various levels and functional areas of the two organizations.

“We have a handful of contacts at Tellabs who make our work possible,” Naegeli said.

#### CONSTANT COMMUNICATION

At least once every three years, all Miracom employees who work with Tellabs visit Tellabs’ facility in Finland, where the company’s regional support staff is based. Besides providing the opportunity for technical training, this approach also gives both companies’ employees valuable face time.

“They can exchange experiences and get updated on who is responsible for what on each side,” Naegeli said. “We want to make sure that people who troubleshoot know each other and one another’s level of education so that when they are troubleshooting, they can start with intelligent questions because they have an idea of what the other side is capable of.”

Miracom also has found value in the Web-based portal that Tellabs provides exclusively for partners. Miracom’s staff uses it to stay abreast of new product announcements, including competitive information.

“We like to see how Tellabs views the market situations and players,” Naegeli said. “It’s very important for us.”

This kind of information is helpful for generating additional business from customers such as the aforementioned European operator.

“We know from Tellabs what’s happening in other markets,” Naegeli said. “They help us recognize trends. We try to think of issues ahead of our customers so that by the time they start to think about a problem, we have a solution.”

#### STG: “CUSTOMERS ARE VERY CONFIDENT”



STG, founded in 1989, serves several regional network operators in Central America.

“They feel confident asking STG for support knowing that we are a strategic Tellabs partner and their experience will be similar,” said Jorge Escobedo, STG’s president. “We add the value of having local people. Competitors mostly have one regional office in Central America or perhaps Mexico or Colombia. Customers are very confident asking us about new projects because of the knowledge we have, not only on equipment, but on the customer’s network.”

#### TELLABS PARTNERS ARE EXTENSIONS OF THE COMPANY’S SALES AND SUPPORT TEAM.

STG first worked with Tellabs in 1994, and over the years the partnership has grown to where Tellabs now represents about 60% of STG’s business.

One of STG’s key customers is a regional operator that has acquired several other operators. STG and Tellabs began to work with the operator after the partners hosted a technical seminar about Tellabs products tailored for a company that the operator later acquired.

Recently, the operator sought STG’s advice when it was searching for a solution to transport all of its mobile traffic. STG suggested the carrier consider upgrading its existing network based on SDH to Tellabs’ ROADM technology.

“They needed to have a huge differentiator because they had competition and were the newcomers in the market,” said Juan David Alvarado, account manager for STG.

Decision-makers liked the fact that ROADM technology enables them to upgrade bandwidth between individual nodes on a ring. Network operators can accommodate growth only where needed, rather than having to upgrade an entire ring. The customer also was planning a video launch. Based on information from experts at Tellabs and the experiences of other Tellabs customers, STG recommended ROADM because it minimizes and often eliminates the need for regeneration to support video delivery.

This critical information prompted the operator to enlist STG’s and Tellabs’ help to construct two separate networks, including one spanning several countries.

Tellabs resources, including an online partner portal, were helpful during the deployment process and for ongoing support.

“We use the portal to get detailed technical and configuration information we need to support our customers,” said Santiago Munoz, product and commercial manager for STG. “The portal also has a subset of features the customers can use. We show them how to use it and they can get the information they need directly from the portal.”

Thanks to close coordination between the partners, the projects were completed on schedule and the networks are working well for the customer. The partners are working on other new opportunities with that customer and others, including a possible geographic expansion.

Miracom and STG are just two out of 70 partners that help support Tellabs’ global operations.

“Network operators are looking for the expertise that Tellabs has developed in serving their counterparts around the world,” Shilgalis said. “The PartnerPlus program provides an excellent platform for bringing that expertise to our customers using a trusted local partner as the conduit.” ■

**ATM:** Asynchronous Transfer Mode **GSM:** Global System for Mobile Communications **ROADM:** Reconfigurable Optical Add/Drop Multiplexer **SDH:** Synchronous Digital Hierarchy