



"I'm Calling A Time-Out!"

By Bryan Rader ■ *Media Works*

Momentum is an interesting phenomenon. When you are riding the crest of momentum, it's as if everything comes your way. You leverage off the positive, and filter out the negative. Your performance is better, and the results oftentimes exceed your own goals.

When momentum is not going your way, the opposite occurs. You begin to think very negatively—another failure, same old song and dance, nothing good can happen.

Look at momentum in the stock market. When a public company is on a momentous swing, investors jump to the good news and praise the revenue gains. They don't pay attention to the missed earnings or same-store sales declines. But when a company is out of favor and has no momentum, investors pounce on every negative report and hammer the stock price and public perception as well.

Look at what momentum does during a football game. Some of the hardest tackles come from special teams during kick-off after their offense scores a touchdown. When your team has momentum, you seem to make every field goal, pick up every fumble, and own the better field position. When your team doesn't have momentum, they are more prone to mistakes, turnovers and breakdowns in pass protection.

Confidence gets shattered, and the negative thoughts begin to perpetuate within the heads of your teammates. And then it feeds on itself, until you lose another game.

So, how do you create momentum? How can you begin to build momentum for your team?

Look at the private broadband in-

dustry for a minute. We clearly do not have the "momentum" right now. And it's easy to see why. In the past three to four years we have seen so many failures of well-funded operators who ran into trouble. We have seen the meltdown of our largest programming aggregator and digital platform. We have seen many providers sell to the local franchise because they could no longer compete. We have seen bankruptcies, sell-offs, shutdowns, drop-outs and ...well you understand the mind-set in our industry.

And we have shaken the confidence of our real estate clients during this process. Their oftentimes negative feeling toward our group of providers has added to this downward spiral.

So how do we get out of this cycle? What can cause a fundamental shift in the mindset of our marketplace that can once again bring positive momentum to private broadband?

Let's look at football games again. What does the head coach do when his team has lost momentum, has lost confidence and concentration, and is beginning to develop a losing attitude? They call a time-out.

So, private broadband: I am calling a time-out! And I am doing it right before we begin the new year. We need to end this negativity, defeatist attitude and lay the groundwork for a fresh positive outlook and the start of a solid momentous swing.

Forget about the failing operators and providers of the past. Forget that some companies are selling out to the local provider. And forget that our recent past included the debacle of a large programming distributor. That's like focusing on our poor third-down conversions, fumbles lost, and four-

teen point deficit starting the fourth quarter. We can't think about those things now.

We have to look at our successes. We have numerous young PCOs throughout the country which are using new technologies to satisfy property owners. We have many partnering opportunities with DirecTV, Dish, HITS and VOOOM to consider. We are now offering high-speed Internet on our own with great companies like Coesma and coaX-media. We can offer broadband services at many different speeds, prices and service levels.

We can customize. We can cherry-pick. We are leaner, faster, more responsive, and better marketers. We can bundle, package and design for each site we serve. Our competition cannot do that.

We have more companies than ever before getting into our industry – whether it be data first, video second, or the other way around. And real-estate owners are once again disillusioned by the franchise operators.

When this time-out is over and we get back in the huddle, we should be more confident and optimistic that 2004 is going to be a momentous year for private broadband.

Let's start this positive swing right now. ■

About the Author

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