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This Week's Stories

Amazon To Launch Delivery Service That Would Vie With FedEx, UPS

February 09, 2018

Amazon.com Inc. is preparing to launch a delivery service for businesses, positioning it to directly compete with United Parcel Service Inc. and FedEx Corp.

Dubbed "Shipping with Amazon," or SWA, the new service will entail the tech giant picking up packages from businesses and shipping them to consumers, according to people familiar with the matter.

Amazon expects to roll out the new delivery service in Los Angeles in coming weeks with third-party merchants that sell goods via its website, according to the people. Amazon then aims to expand the service to more cities as soon as this year, some of the people say.

While the program is being piloted with the company's third-party sellers, it is envisioned to eventually be opened to other businesses too, according to some of the people. Amazon is planning to undercut UPS and FedEx on pricing, although the exact rate structure is still unclear, these people said.

The new service, which stems from a Los Angeles pilot project first reported by The Wall Street Journal more than a year ago, moves Amazon into direct competition for parcel business currently handled by delivery partners UPS and FedEx. "Shipping With Amazon" was previously tested and rolled out in London.

It is the latest move by Amazon to create its own freight and parcel delivery network. In the last couple of years, Amazon has expanded into ocean freight, built a network of its own drivers who can now deliver inside homes and leased up to 40 aircraft while establishing an air cargo hub.

Amazon already delivers some of its own orders in at least 37 U.S. cities. With the new "Shipping with Amazon" option, Amazon plans to send drivers to pick up shipments from warehouses and businesses itself and deliver the packages when it is able, the people said. For shipments outside Amazon's delivery reach, the U.S. Postal Service and other carriers will take care of the so-called last mile to customers' doorsteps.

"We're always innovating and experimenting on behalf of customers and the businesses that sell and grow on Amazon to create faster lower-cost delivery choices," a spokeswoman said in a statement. It remains to be seen whether Amazon can successfully deliver packages for other businesses on a broad scale. UPS and FedEx have built out massive networks over the course of decades to allow them to deliver across the U.S. And it is expensive. UPS this year alone is planning to spend up to \$7 billion on upgrading its delivery network.

A spokesman said that UPS continues to support Amazon and other customers and doesn't comment on customers' business strategies or decisions regarding using UPS services.

FedEx didn't have an immediate comment. On the company's December earnings call, executives were asked about what would happen if Amazon started competing for its shipping business, to



which they said they don't comment on hypothetical situations. They added that Amazon was a longstanding customer, but that no customer represented more than 3% of revenue or volume.

Amazon's push into logistics reflects its growing ambitions across a wide range of new businesses beyond online retail. The company runs a dominant cloud-computing services division, a Hollywood studio and a massive marketplace and logistics operation for sellers. Last year, it acquired Whole Foods for roughly \$13.5 billion, transforming it into a brick-and-mortar grocer overnight.

Last week, Amazon said it was teaming up with JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Berkshire Hathaway Inc. to form a new company to try to lower their employees' health costs, rattling health-care firm stocks. Amazon started building out its logistics network in earnest after it missed deliveries during the all-important holiday season in December 2013, according to people familiar with Amazon's thinking. As more shoppers bought products online, Amazon executives concluded that the rate of parcel growth was too large for existing carriers to handle. Amazon also wanted to offer two-day deliveries, seven days a week.

The company has separately launched a logistics service called "FBA Onsite," according to the people familiar with the matter. Currently, most third-party sellers on Amazon's website ship their goods to an Amazon warehouse for its "Fulfillment by Amazon" program to qualify for Prime shipping. With FBA Onsite, sellers automatically qualify for Prime and then can ship directly from their own warehouse using software provided by Amazon.

While Amazon will control the method of those shipments, pickups and deliveries for now will still be handled by various carriers, including UPS and FedEx, the people said. Bloomberg News earlier reported on FBA Onsite.

For its "Shipping with Amazon" option, the online retail giant is expected to be able to offer lower prices than UPS and FedEx because it already delivers some of its own packages — any extra space it can fill in its trucks with additional deliveries is considered added revenue, according to people familiar with the company's thinking.

msn.com

Blockchains Are Verticalizing, So We Need Interoperability

February 07, 2018

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"As we now start to use blockchains that hold financial information, human information, machine data information - and analytics records that are a combined result of all other information - we need to ask: who engineers the blockchain connectivity factor?"

As the underpinning technology substrate designed to initially serve the development of cryptocurrencies, blockchain has been variously misunderstood and often confused with Bitcoin itself. In the most simple terms possible, a blockchain is a bookkeeper's paper ledger, but in a digital decentralized form so that its records appear on many computers across a distributed peer-to-peer network. As Forbes contributor Stewart R. Levine explains in clear terms, a digital blockchain ledger records transactions that relate to transfers of value or information between two parties.

Because a blockchain, any blockchain (it is a plural, crucially) is simultaneously shared and trusted, it said to be immutable, that is - it cannot be changed, because it exists as a ratifiable record in more than one place. Just because a blockchain is immutable, that does not guarantee that it can't be reverse-engineered to find out who made what entries to it - and in blockchain deployments relating to financial transactions or patient records, this does have security implications - but that's another story.

Verticalization Of blockchains

What matters now is how we weave together different uses of blockchain into the software applications that we use everyday. This is because we are starting to specialize what we do with

blockchains (again, plural) i.e. we are starting to see the verticalization of blockchains and similar distributed technologies for specific data and information recording uses.

As we now start to use blockchains that hold financial information, human information, machine data information - and analytics records that are a combined result of all other information - we need to ask: who engineers the blockchain connectivity factor? That person (or persons) is the software application developer, the programmer, the software engineer. So how do they do it?

Founder and CEO of Crowd Machine is Craig Sproule. The company's technology exists as a software platform for building decentralized applications across different blockchains. The brand named Crowd App Studio product can be used by developer programmers (and, to a degree, by non-techie non-developers) to build decentralized apps that run on a peer-to-peer network computer made up of mobile devices and PCs called, logically, the Crowd Computer. Sproule claims that Crowd App Studio enables the creation of decentralized apps to meet any requirement and, additionally, blockchain smart contracts can be created to meet what are often demanding requirements.

"While the explosion of ICOs (Initial Coin Offerings) in 2017 has brought a range of new projects to the market, everyone wants to know which will be the eventual winner. As a platform for building decentralized apps across different blockchains, we're seeing the emerging trend toward verticalized blockchains accelerating. As an industry, we need to address blockchain interoperability as an inherent blockchain capability before we see major integrations challenges emerge," said Sproule.

Different Types Of Blockchain

Pointing to initiatives including the Blockchain Interoperability Alliance, which was announced in November 2017, Sproule says we are already witnessing an increase in awareness of the need for greater degree of connectivity between different blockchains. Sproule believes that standardization could be an important route, as we see more blockchains start to specialize in areas such as title transfers, medical records, authentication, event registrations and energy trades.

"At the moment, interoperability is managed at the app level, but that requires developers to be proficient in different smart contract languages, Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) or third party tools. If the interoperability requirement is to continue to be resolved within the app, then an approach would be to standardize on a common smart contract language across all blockchains. Failing that, then app development platforms can provide a level of abstraction that generates smart contracts or calls for each blockchain being utilized", said Sproule.

Crowd Machine's smart contract auto-generation feature means developers can create the logic they want without worrying about the underpinning smart contract technology. This development means that each blockchain becomes subservient to the app it is used for. But says Sproule, through use of the Crowd Machine Network, it makes it possible to use the blockchain that offers the best price at the time of transaction.

Piloting Perfects Performance

While we may still be some way off of resolving the blockchain interoperability and interconnectivity conundrum in totality, we are certainly at the point where we will now start to look more closely at the synaptic points of contact that make up this new data network that we are all starting to understand.

This story ultimately places a lot of responsibility for functionality in the hands of our software developers and - if they do enough homework (with 'live' production pilots) to assess blockchain application use cases - then that should be a good thing.

forbes.com

5G Could Change Everything From Music To Medicine

February 05, 2018

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"One example: A surgeon with virtual reality equipment and haptic gloves, which sense motion and pressure, could operate on a patient on the other side of the world via a robot."

5G is going to be a really big deal.

The lightning quick "next generation" wireless technology is expected to power self-driving cars, virtual reality, smart cities and networked robots.

But what else can it do?

Ericsson has joined up with researchers from King's College London to dream up futuristic applications for 5G. They're looking at everything from music to medicine.

The team is focused on using the technology to transfer physical skills across networks, creating something they call the "Internet of Skills."

One example: A surgeon with virtual reality equipment and haptic gloves, which sense motion and pressure, could operate on a patient on the other side of the world via a robot.

Remote surgery has been possible for a while, but 5G speeds should eliminate all delays and lag. That means the surgeon could get instant feedback via the gloves.

"With 5G and the new networking architecture we're building, we're hoping to get this delay down to just the speed of light," said Mischa Dohler, a professor of wireless communications at King's College.

Dohler, who moonlights as a composer and pianist, also plans to digitize his piano skills and teach people remotely to master the instrument.

Haptic gloves can be used to track and record the movement of Dohler's fingers, and the position of his hands. The data would be stored on the skills database, ready to be downloaded by an aspiring pianist.

"They would download that in real time on to an exoskeleton, which would start to move their fingers until the muscle memory is trained," said Dohler.

"They could actually practice their muscle memory anywhere they want," he added. Dohler also imagines a surgeon could upload their skills to a database to train students around the world.

But he said it might take another decade for this "Internet of Skills" to be fully functional.

"We need to get security rights and the best practice of this technology right, because the moment you start moving things on the other side of the planet, you can do a lot of harm," he said.

[msn.com](https://www.msn.com)

Products & Services

Microsoft Offers Box, Dropbox, And Google Cloud Customers Free OneDrive For Business Until Their Contracts Expire

February 06, 2018

What do you do if you want more people to use your service when there are many other competing services out there already? Offer it to them for free, of course. And that is exactly what Microsoft is doing to encourage signups for its OneDrive for Business cloud storage service.

Microsoft announced today that companies already signed up to Box, Dropbox, or Google's cloud storage services can make the switch to OneDrive and not pay a penny for the duration of their existing contract.

The offer is valid from today through June 30, 2018, but there are some caveats. Only companies that are not already OneDrive or Office 365 customers can apply, while those that are interested in making the switch must make a minimum 500 user commitment.

A quick peek at OneDrive for Business plans reveals that a basic cloud storage only plan starts at \$60 per user per year, though it can cost up to \$120 per user if the company requires advanced compliance and security features. So that's \$5 to \$10 per user each month, meaning that a hypothetical company with 500 employees could "save" up to \$5,000 each month — though of course they're not really saving anything as they've already invested in their existing cloud storage service. Really, this move is just designed to expedite a switch where a company perhaps regrets signing up to Box, Dropbox, or Google's cloud services.

Though Google has made big strides in the enterprise realm with G Suite, its cloud-based alternative to Office, Microsoft's productivity programs remain the software of choice for most companies.

Microsoft has also been pushing the online version of Office, which offers real-time coauthoring functionality through OneDrive, so it may not require all that much to encourage businesses to switch to OneDrive.

venturebeat.com

Dell EMC Debuts PowerEdge Servers With AMD EPYC Chips

February 06, 2018

AMD notched another EPYC processor win today with Dell EMC's introduction of three PowerEdge servers (R6415, R7415, and R7425) based on the EPYC 7000-series processor. AMD's new chip line has been steadily gaining traction among systems builders and cloud providers.

The new Dell servers are being positioned as, "highly scalable, single- and dual-socket servers designed to address high-performance workloads, including virtualized storage area networks (VSAN), hybrid-cloud applications, dense virtualization, and big data analytics." The servers, says Dell, provide up to 20 percent lower total cost of ownership for VSAN and 25 percent more HPC performance for modern workloads.

To some extent, Dell's adoption of AMD's new chips came later than expected. When AMD introduced EPYC last June, Dell strongly endorsed the move: "The combination of PowerEdge and the AMD EPYC performance and security capabilities will create unique compute solutions for our

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"AMD is betting on what it believes is a big enough price performance advantage with its new line to win back customers after its absence from the data center processor market."

customers to accelerate workloads and protect their business,” said Ashley Gorakhpurwalla, president, server solutions, Dell, in the AMD press release.

HPE, Supermicro, Penguin, Baidu, and Microsoft Azure, for example, all took the EPYC plunge earlier. EPYC, of course, competes directly with Intel for x86 sockets. AMD is betting on what it believes is a big enough price performance advantage with its new line to win back customers after its absence from the data center processor market. (see HPCwire article, AMD Showcases Growing Portfolio of EPYC and Radeon-based Systems at SC17.)

The new Dell servers are offered in both single- and dual-socket versions with design features ranging from 32 to 64 cores, up to 4TB of memory capacity, and 12 to 24x direct NVMe drives optimized for database and analytics workloads. Dell emphasizes EPYC also supports high bandwidth and GPU/FPGA capabilities for HPC applications.

Stimulating a single-socket market, largely absent in the data center today, is an important AMD goal. The company reports demand has so far been split equally between single- and two-socket designs. “We tend to see the single socket really resonating on let’s call it the more GPU-centric computing where the CPU tends to be more supervisory as opposed to a foundational computing role,” said Scott Aylor, AMD corporate VP and GM of enterprise solutions business. “The one socket has also drawn attention in big data applications where its ability to connect to massive number of drives is a distinguishing attribute, he said.

Two of the new Dell servers are single-socket designs. Here’s a configuration snapshot from Dell: PowerEdge R7425 “enables fast workload performance” on more cores. It has up to 2 enterprise class EPYC processors; memory and IO flexibility with up to 32 DDR4 DIMMs and 128 lanes of PCIe; storage performance with up to 24 NVMe drives; up to 4 terabytes memory capacity for database analytics; and increased VDI instances with up to 64 cores.

PowerEdge R7415 is intended to “scale workloads while managing costs,” says Dell. “The R7415 delivers software defined storage or business analytics in a single processor design.” Features include: memory and IO flexibility with up to 16 DDR4 DIMMs and 128 lanes of PCIe; storage performance with up to 24 NVMe drives; and up to 2 terabytes memory capacity for in-line memory and analytics.

PowerEdge R6415 “balances resources to support demanding workloads...the R6415 single processor server tightly matches workload needs without adding underutilized resources,” according to Dell.

Features include: storage performance with up to 10 NVMe drives; up to 2 terabytes of memory and 128 PCIe lanes. Dell says the R6415 “simplifies and speeds deployments with VMware vSAN and ScaleIO Ready Nodes.”

“With AMD’s EPYC processor integrated into the new Dell EMC PowerEdge platforms, we can deliver the scalability and lower total cost of ownership needed to meet the demands of new emerging workloads,” said Ravi Pendekanti, SVP, product management and marketing, Server and Infrastructure Systems, Dell EMC. “Customers are constantly looking for ways to drive growth and leverage new models of computing. AMD’s single-socket platform is a great example of Dell PowerEdge servers moving the industry forward to solve real customer problems.”

The new servers are available now. As listed on Dell’s website, the R6415 starts at \$2,179.00, the R7415 at \$2,349.00, and the R7425 at \$3,819.00.

enterprisetech.com

Emerging Technology

Human Sequencing Pioneer George Church Wants To Give You The Power To Sell Your DNA On The Blockchain

February 08, 2018

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“Those buying up tokens and sequencing their DNA through Nebula don’t have to sell it for money, of course, and Nebula says they can still discover insights about their own genetics through the company app without sharing it elsewhere, if they desire.”

The blockchain is the buzziest thing on the internet these days and now MIT professor and godfather of the Human Genome Project George Church wants to put your genes on it.

His new startup Nebula Genomics plans to sequence your genome for less than \$1,000 (the current going rate of whole genome sequencing) and then add your data to the blockchain through the purchase of a “Nebula Token.”

The idea sounds outlandish, but Church and his colleagues laid out in a recently released white paper that this will put the genomic power in the hands of the consumer, as opposed to companies like 23andMe and AncestryDNA, which own your genomic data after you take that spit tube test.

These companies sell that data in large swaths to pharmaceutical and research companies, often for millions of dollars. However, using the blockchain, consumers can choose to sell their own data directly.

Many people have yet to sequence their data, mostly due to cost or privacy concerns, but with the option to then sell that data to drug companies, possibly discover cures for rare diseases and make a buck while doing it could sweeten the incentive to sequence.

Those buying up tokens and sequencing their DNA through Nebula don’t have to sell it for money, of course, and Nebula says they can still discover insights about their own genetics through the company app without sharing it elsewhere, if they desire.

However, all bought and sold data will be recorded on the blockchain, which is a technology allowing for the recording of all transactions using a key code known only to the person who holds the information.

Will people go for this new proposition to buy a token, sequence their own data and then sell it directly? Nebula is too new to tell right now — it hasn’t even announced when or if it will hold a token sale. The tokens also might not accumulate in value like bitcoin or other cryptocurrencies, as they are only redeemable for an individual’s DNA data, which the company has said it will do in partnership with Veritas Genetics, a company Church also co-founded.

Sequencing costs are likely to drop in the future, so a Nebula Token could also drop in value as the price goes down. However, as Nebula co-founder Dennis Grishin told Stat News about the announcement, people “will probably be directly and indirectly buying tokens from individuals to resell them to data buyers” to try to make a profit.

Co-founder Kamal Obbad also noted that as sequencing costs drop, that will attract more buyers. Further, he said, the size of studies will grow, requiring more tokens for purchase.

“These factors will help maintain a high demand for Nebula Tokens,” Obbad told TechCrunch, adding that the supply of these tokens would be fixed.

A few other startups, like EncrypGen, Luna DNA and Zenome, have mentioned building platforms where individuals can sell their DNA data, as well, though none of them offer whole genome sequencing and folks would need to obtain their data from a third-party source first.

Those interested in buying tokens and selling their DNA through Nebula will also have to wait a bit. The platform is not open to do so at the moment. However, the company says it should be ready in the next few months.

techcrunch.com

Mergers and Acquisitions

Agility First Forwarder To Join Maersk-IBM Blockchain Project

February 08, 2018

Agility Logistics has joined Maersk and IBM on a project that uses blockchain to manage and track container shipments, becoming the first 3PL to do so.

Agility will “identify events associated with individual shipments and share and receive information about them via the distributed ledger blockchain technology developed by IBM and Maersk,” the company said in a statement.

The last few years have seen a slew of innovating blockchain projects hit the market, garnering support from businesses across the logistics sector.

One major benefit of blockchain technology is its ability to securely encode data, rendering sensitive information invisible—at least so far—to hackers.

It’s also more secure than traditional networks because it stores the encrypted information in several locations along the blockchain.

“What blockchain really means is that it’s a safer environment, because what would previously have been stored in just one place is kept in multiple places across a chain and so to actually bring down someone’s network you’ll need a massive amount of computing power,” says Jim Bralsford, VP of sales, EMEA, INTTRA, the world’s foremost container booking platform.

As cybercrime grows more sophisticated, logistics companies are attempting to better lock down their data operations.

Maersk Line had significant amounts of data stolen last year, with many of its customers blackmailed by the hackers in a ransomware scam.

The Maersk-IBM-Agility project makes this encrypted data visible only to shippers, carriers, freight forwarders and others in the immediate supply chain.

“Blockchain technology is going to make shipping cheaper, safer and more reliable,” said Essa Al-Saleh, CEO of Agility Global Integrated Logistics.

Al-Saleh noted that, by eliminating time-consuming paper transfers, blockchain could shorten transit and clearance times.

These kinds of analog documentation and administration procedures are estimated to comprise one-fifth of the US\$1.8 trillion spent annually to move goods across borders.

arabiansupplychain.com

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“The Maersk-IBM-Agility project makes this encrypted data visible only to shippers, carriers, freight forwarders and others in the immediate supply chain.”

Juniper, TIM To Develop Cloud-Oriented Network Under MoU

February 05, 2018

Juniper Networks and TIM sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Italian mobile operator TIM and Juniper Networks are working together under a MoU on the research and development of cloud-oriented network infrastructure.

As part of the collaboration, the companies will experiment and test new network techniques to improve performance, reliability and security. Automation, virtualization and open interfaces will serve as the basis of these techniques.

“Juniper believes that simplicity in both network design and operation has to become a core value for the networking industry and we welcome the opportunity to work with a forward-thinking operator such as TIM to help deliver effective solutions for the challenges presented by trends such as IoT, security, 5G and big data,” said Tom Ruban, chief technical officer EMEA at Juniper.

“We are committed to sharing expertise, projects, laboratories and resources to design, experiment and implement the technologies to foster the digital transformation that will enable the next-generation service offerings to TIM’s customers across Italy.”

TIM said that it wants to ensure its FutureNet software defined infrastructure and ultra-broadband customer network platform are fit as 5G and IoT requirements develop over the next five years. The partners will focus on leveraging software-defined networking (SDN) and open optical systems.

“TIM’s goal is to accelerate its evolution towards the network of the future. Our vision is towards a more automated, interconnected and agile network that reacts more easily to customer demands,” said Enrico Bagnasco, head of innovation at TIM. “Through the development of Software Defined Networking and open optical systems, TIM will be able to develop a host of software components that can be activated where and when needed, based on customer needs.”

Juniper also recently reported its fourth-quarter preliminary financial results. Net revenues were \$1.24 billion, a decrease of 11% year-over-year and 1% sequentially.

rcwireless.com

Industry Reports

TUI UK & Ireland Implements Medallia To Expand Commitment To Customers

February 07, 2018

Medallia, Inc. (www.medallia.com) today announced that TUI UK and Ireland has implemented a best-in-class customer experience program in its 600 retail stores. TUI UK is the largest holiday brand, delivering unique and modern holiday experiences for its customers every year. TUI UK uses Medallia to understand real-time customer feedback, which in turn helps to empower store managers by better understanding customer sentiment and to take quick action.

With an already high Net Promoter Score®, TUI UK understands that booking a holiday is a very special moment for its customers, and for this reason they sought a simple and intuitive system to roll

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“Early results are positive as TUI UK has reported that it has seen a 30% increase in customer response rates.”

out to all of its travel stores. Early results are positive as TUI UK has reported that it has seen a 30% increase in customer response rates. The company believes this success is due to the more accessible design by Medallia and by creating a strong first survey question. In addition, 93% of respondents leave feedback comments at the end of the survey, providing firsthand perspective on the customer experience.

Helen Caron, Distribution and Cruise Director for TUI UK and Ireland said: "Partnering with Medallia has brought a positive change for our business giving us real-time insights on customer feedback, which enables us to make changes to enhance the experience for customers in our stores."

"We're so excited to use the Medallia Voices™ mobile app," said Brian Pressey, Customer Experience Senior Leader at TUI UK. "I personally check the app multiple times a day, and we've introduced the app to all of our board directors and senior leaders within the organisation to ensure they're always only a clickaway from the real voice of the customer."

With this new program, TUI UK will reward and incentivize both store managers and travel advisors for positive customer feedback which it has been unable to do in the past.

"In the competitive market for holiday travel, TUI is a leader for delivering best-in-class customer service," said Sean Farrington, VP of Medallia, Europe. "By implementing role-based dashboards for store managers, TUI can now continue to provide excellent service to travellers who are about to embark on their dream holiday."

In addition, TUI will test potential features for new stores by using AskNow, which can run real-world tests on specific customer segments. AskNow can allow TUI to test and iterate, creating a culture of continuous improvement by validating customer reactions with real customer data.

TUI UK & Ireland

TUI UK and Ireland, part of TUI Group, is the business behind the TUI, First Choice and Marella Cruises brands, as well as Crystal Ski and TUI Lakes & Mountains. Sub brands include TUI Senatori, TUI Family Life, TUI Sensimar, First Choice Holiday Villages and SplashWorld Resorts.

Its airline, TUI Airways – formerly Thomson Airways has 64 aircraft operating to over 70 destinations in 30 countries. It was the first airline in the UK to take delivery of Boeing's 787 Dreamliner and in 2018 will welcome new 737 MAXs to its fleet.

TUI UK and Ireland has a team of more than 10,000 employees and serves over six million customers each year.

About Medallia

Medallia's mission is simple: to create a world where companies are loved by customers and employees alike. Hundreds of the world's best-loved brands trust Medallia's Software-as-a-Service application to help them capture customer feedback everywhere the customer is (on the phone, in store, online, mobile), understand it in real-time, and deliver insights and action everywhere—from the C-suite to the frontline—to improve their performance. Founded in 2001, Medallia has offices in Silicon Valley, New York, London, Paris, Sydney, Buenos Aires, and Tel Aviv. Learn more at www.medallia.com.

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4traders.com

Broadcom Unveils \$121 billion 'Best And Final' Offer For Qualcomm

February 05, 2018

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"Broadcom's new \$82 per share offer included \$60 in cash and \$22 in Broadcom stock."

Broadcom Ltd made a \$121 billion "best and final offer" on Monday to acquire Qualcomm Inc, ratcheting up pressure on its U.S. semiconductor peer to engage in talks on what would be the biggest ever technology acquisition.

The takeover battle is at the heart of a race to consolidate the wireless technology equipment sector, as smartphone makers such as Apple Inc and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd use their market dominance to negotiate down chip prices.

Qualcomm responded that its board of directors would review the latest offer, and declined to comment further until then.

Broadcom's new \$82 per share offer included \$60 in cash and \$22 in Broadcom stock. Its first offer, of \$70 per share, in November comprised \$60 in cash and \$10 in stock. The increased stock component would subject the deal to a Broadcom shareholder vote.

Reuters first reported on Broadcom's new offer on Sunday.

Qualcomm shares fell 4.3 percent to \$63.20 at mid-afternoon on doubts about the deal's prospects, as well a KGI Securities report that said Apple might drop the chipmaker in favor of Intel Corp to supply modem chips for its next-generation iPhones.

Broadcom shares edged up 0.2 percent to \$235.77.

"Qualcomm and its board now have a tough decision, as this is a compelling offer in our opinion," said analyst Daniel Ives of GBH Insights.

Singapore-based Broadcom is mainly a manufacturer whose connectivity chips are used in products ranging from mobile phones to servers. Qualcomm primarily licenses its technology for the delivery of broadband and data, a business that would significantly benefit from the rollout of 5G wireless technology.

Qualcomm is locked in a patent dispute with Apple over its licensing agreements.

"Qualcomm got where it did in the last 30 years with a business model hinging on intellectual property licensing that is, at this day and age, not sustainable. You can sell products, as Broadcom does, very successfully, and generate a very good return for your shareholders," Broadcom Chief Executive Hock Tan said in an interview.

In a presentation issued on its website, Broadcom criticized Qualcomm's management team, led by its CEO Steve Mollenkopf, for its total shareholder returns of negative 7 percent since 2005, while the wider semiconductor index has returned 106 percent.

In January, Qualcomm announced an ambitious 2019 profit target predicated on a new \$1 billion cost reduction plan and resolving licensing disputes, including with Apple. Broadcom said there was no reason to believe Qualcomm's latest initiative would be successful.

Broadcom also announced concessions to address Qualcomm's concerns that their combination could take more than 18 months to secure regulatory approval, and that divestitures demanded by anti-trust watchdogs could be financially burdensome.

Broadcom said it was willing to pay Qualcomm a "ticking fee" if the transaction is not completed within its target of 12 months after any definitive agreement. It would also pay a significant "reverse termination fee" if regulators scuttle the deal.

Broadcom's antitrust counsel, Daniel Wall of Latham & Watkins LLP, said in a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that Broadcom was willing to sell two Qualcomm businesses to resolve any antitrust problems. These are its Wi-Fi networking processors and RF Front End chips for mobile phones.

"There is no antitrust issue. The overlap is very limited in this transaction. People talk about us making even more commitments on the regulatory front, like adding hell-or-high-water provisions, which are not a very well defined legal standard, and we chose not to include it because it would not add much incremental certainty," said Tan.

QUALCOMM'S DEAL WITH NXP

Broadcom said on Monday its improved offer was premised on either Qualcomm acquiring NXP Semiconductors NV on the current disclosed terms of \$110 per share in cash, or the \$38 billion transaction being terminated.

NXP shareholders, led by activist hedge fund Elliott Management Corp, are resisting the deal, pushing for Qualcomm to raise its offer. NXP shares were trading at \$119.16 on Monday afternoon, indicating investors were expecting a sweeter deal.

Qualcomm's proposed acquisition of NXP was approved by European Union antitrust regulators last month. Qualcomm expects China's blessing later this month, at which point it has to decide whether it would raise its offer.

At Qualcomm's March 6 shareholder meeting, Broadcom plans to nominate a slate of directors to replace Qualcomm's board. That remains the company's focus unless Qualcomm agrees to negotiate, Tan said. When asked, he did not exclude the option of launching a direct offer for Qualcomm shares.

reuters.com



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