



News Release

Competition crucial to innovation

(Brussels, 8 March 2017): Balan Nair, Chief Technology Officer at Liberty Global, rallied delegates at Cable Congress behind a strong industry narrative of innovation. “Innovation in the cable industry is better than ever” he announced but reminded the audience that “you have to think big, but act small” to keep the industry savvy and responsive. He welcomed active competition, saying that “innovation comes from start ups and entrepreneurs and competitors. If we don’t have competition, our ambition to innovate decreases.”

On International Women’s Day, Nair said that Liberty Global had high representation of women, but the tech sector generally was not doing well enough overall. He encouraged talented women entering the world of cable to “take a risk. Opportunities will present themselves but they are always risky. Sieze that risk.”

In an earlier panel, Heads of Innovation had sought to debunk myths around innovation, in particular the ‘eureka moment’. “Eureka moments must be eureka moments for consumers,” said Antonio Rodriguez del Corral, Director of Innovation at Euskaltel Group, “Our job is to create something which listens to consumer needs.” Gavin Sheldon, VP Connectivity at Liberty Global, added “Good execution is crucial to something being successful. Start ups can be better at moulding ideas; incumbents can work on being less binary and more willing to adapt ideas.”

A panel of content providers and cable operators gave their perspective on content strategies in the age of Netflix. Investment in content is higher than it has ever been in the industry, and is crucial to business strategies: “we need to spend more on distinction,” Bruce Mann, Chief programming Officer at Liberty Global said, “our customers must feel that they get something special from us.” Tatjana Vucanovic, VP Programme Sales EMEA for Disney Media Distribution, agreed: “everyone needs to differentiate themselves, including Netflix. Exclusivity is really important as a strategy.”

In a thought-provoking presentation, Christian Kurz, Senior VP for Consumer Insights at Viacom, called on the audience to forget about millennials and refocus on Generation X, who are the leaders of today and tomorrow as well as consumers with disposable incomes now. Content strategies should be tailored to them: “to get Gen X right, we should reflect the diversity and the reality of that generation, such as their family lives for example, while also tapping into their nostalgia of the 80-90s.”

Cable Congress 2017 is taking place in Brussels from Wednesday 8 March until Thursday 9 March. Please visit www.cablecongress.com for the latest updates, talk to us on Twitter via @CableEurope, and follow the conversation live using #cablecongress.



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About Cable Europe

Cable Europe is the trade association that connects leading broadband cable TV operators and their national trade associations throughout the European Union. The regulatory and public policy activities of Cable Europe aim to promote and defend the industry's policies and business interests at European and international level. The European cable industry provides high speed broadband internet, TV services, and telephony into the home of more than 63 million homes in the European Union.

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