



# FTTH:

## The quickening pace of change

The FTTH Council MENA works to educate and support operators, regulators and utilities on the economic and social benefits of FTTH in the region through global experience and viewpoints.



Our first interview in this series is with the CEO of OFS and board member of the FTTH Council MENA, Dr. Timothy Murray, who took the

time to give us a view of the state of the world of fiber telecoms. OFS design,



manufacture and provide optical fiber, fiber optic cable, connectivity, FTTH and specialty optical fiber solutions for telecommunications and other industries. The company can trace its history back to the legendary Bell Labs which developed the transistor and the laser, the building blocks of current telecommunications. It recognizes the importance of MENA and is investing effort and time in spreading knowledge and supporting operations in the region.

**You've been with OFS for 14 years and tremendous experience across your career from marketing to R&D and everywhere between, so does anything surprise you anymore about our industry?**

Actually, a few things have been really surprising. Affordable Gigabit FTTH service became available in some areas seven years before many expected. Based on bandwidth growth trends, we expected Gigabit to be available in 2020, and then Google changed the game by offering it in 2013. Other service providers accelerated their FTTH deployment plans or moved to FTTH in response. Content providers such as Netflix are already taking advantage of these high speed connections by offering 4K TV, for which they recommend a steady internet connection of 25 Mbps per video stream. 4K again has appeared earlier than some expected.

**You've talked about Google and the way they are changing the game in the US. Who do you think are some of the other innovative operators in FTTH, either in our regional or globally?**

We see Etisalat as one of the leaders in the Middle East and UAE for FTTH. Globally NTT and Verizon were among the first volume builders of FTTH networks beginning in the early 2000s. Their innovations became models for future deployments, and their success inspired deployments across the globe. Orange in France and Telefonica in Spain and Brazil have increased FTTH deployments and connections in the past two years. Spain in particular has



grown at a really surprising rate given some of the economic challenges.

**We talk about Nielsen's Law, regulatory challenges and similar 'big' topics a lot in the industry, but the nuts and bolts of a network can have a big impact. Can you explain how the right component choices can improve the quality or speed of deployment?**

The right components can make the difference between success and failure in a deployment. Optical fiber cabling systems carry the optical signals in FTTH networks and must provide top performance over many decades through many upgrades. We will soon see 10 Gigabit and faster speeds over FTTH, using multiple wavelengths, and in the next decade peak speeds may reach 80 Gigabits based on standards being finalized today. The right optical fiber cabling system can support today's speeds and future higher speeds without labor intensive replacement. In addition, we have new technologies available that make deployment faster than ever, using plug and play drop cabling and virtually invisible indoor fiber to reach the ONT without upsetting the homeowner.

**I understand things are going well for you at OFS. Can you explain why you are being so successful in the market at present?**

We listen to customer needs before we develop solutions or recommend solutions. We believe each customer has unique requirements and capabilities to deploy networks. One solution does not fit all customers, so we listen closely to fully understand each customer's requirements, then recommend a solution. OFS is one of the few fully integrated designers and manufacturers of the entire optical cabling system including fiber, cable and connectivity, which helps us optimize all these components to work better together for our customers. We can also help customers design more efficient FTTH networks to help reduce total installed costs and operating costs. **TR**