

A large satellite is being hoisted by a thick black cable from a crane. The satellite has a spherical body with a blue band and a complex array of instruments and antennas. The background shows a vast, forested mountain range under a cloudy sky.

Gottlieb's

SATELLITE MOBILITY WORLD

Highlighting Disruptive, New Mobility-Focused Satellite Ventures and Technologies

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iDirect's Intuition Unbound, The Ground Segment as a Service

Satellite Network infrastructure is rapidly becoming software-defined and more efficient as operators replace purpose-built hardware with commercial off-the-shelf deployment options, including cloud enabled deployments.

ST Engineering iDirect is no stranger to innovation. It has unveiled a new pay-as-you-go service model based on its cloud-native, renowned Intuition ground system, effectively minimizing the need for upfront CAPEX investments.

To learn more about Intuition Unbound and how this unique, new service offering can open access to iDirect's powerful ground segment solution without upfront costs and complexity, we met with Sr. V.P. of Corporate Strategy Cynthia Harty.

SMW: What key challenges in the satellite industry does Intuition Unbound aim to address, and how does it differentiate itself from traditional ground segment models?

Cynthia Harty (CH): Driven by market disruption and competitive dynamics, the

proliferation of satellite constellations, satellite IoT, and the need for flexible, scalable solutions, the satellite industry is moving away from static, hardware-based ground systems toward software-defined, orchestrated networks. ST Engineering iDirect's Intuition Unbound is a catalyst for this transformation.

Unlike a traditional CAPEX model, Intuition Unbound delivers services through a usage-based pricing model. It empowers satellite operators to overcome adoption barriers, focus on core business goals, and accelerate time to market.

SMW: Intuition Unbound is flexible, offering two service options. Can you explain each?

CH: Customers have two service options: ***Unbound Operations*** and ***Unbound Capabilities***, which can be purchased separately or together.

Unbound Operations includes ground segment configuration and event management, proactive network monitoring, event response, and reporting analytics.

Unbound Capabilities includes a subscription-based business model for Intuition that facilitates dynamic scalability, on-demand feature access, and upgrades, with a cost-efficient pricing model matching investment to revenue generation.



If you purchase *Unbound Operations*, iDirect will manage the ground segment solution (Hub HW & SW) for you, including configuration management, event management, proactive monitoring, and reporting.

SMW: How do you determine the pricing?

CH: *Unbound Operations* is priced based on the number of configured terminals in the network and whether the network is fixed or mobile, for example, serving a fleet of ships or aircraft.

We price *Unbound Capabilities* on a base set of features bundled into the *Essential Service Package* with optional packages focused on vertical market segments (i.e., cellular backhaul, enterprise, and mobility use cases, etc.) and technology innovations (i.e., NGSO, 5G NTN, and AI/ML etc..). These packages were designed to offer flexibility depending on the markets the customer wants to serve.

SMW: You mentioned that within “Unbound Operations,” you continuously monitor the ground segment solution (Hub HW & SW). Does the customer also have access to the same monitoring capabilities?

CH: The *Unbound Operations* service features a web-based portal allowing customers to effectively monitor and report on the overall network health and performance metrics, including usage statistics and the status of both the Hub and configured terminals to maintain optimal service availability.

The customer portal also offers detailed reporting and analytics, giving customers valuable insights into performance trends, utilization, and growth patterns to support day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

Depending on the service plan chosen, customers can also benefit from consultative network audits, recommendations, and dedicated customer experience management.

SMW: The early adopter customers piloted over the past two years were pivotal for shaping Intuition Unbound. Can you share insights into how those trials influenced the final offering?

CH: We had a total of nine incubator customers for Intuition Unbound across different industries and use cases.

We had four customers as early adopters for *Unbound Operations*, ranging from:

- An offshore oil and gas end customer who needed to get their service up and running quickly. However, they had minimal experience with the iDirect platform. iDirect helped them configure the network, establish the events they needed to monitor, and proactively monitored the network to maintain conformance with their end users SLAs. By deploying the network in under two months, we enabled the customer to meet their market demand within the desired timeframe.

- A customer in the media and broadcast market whose challenge was bridging knowledge gaps as they expanded their network, from learning the technology to mastering operations.
- *Unbound Operations* was an excellent fit for them as iDirect proactively monitors their network to assure SLA compliance and handles all configuration management changes needed to support network longevity.

We had five customers as early adopters for *Unbound Capabilities*, ranging from:

- A customer who provides satcom service to various markets, including cellular backhaul, enterprise, and defense, that was constrained by capital investment and instead opted to subscribe to the service plan and the packages needed to support their expansion and growth objectives.

- An enterprise-based customer with end-user demand in the banking market that was dealing with a legacy, competitive ground segment with support issues and obsolescence concerns. Our customer wanted to improve their ability to offer leading connectivity services in the banking industry by implementing an iDirect ground segment solution quickly to differentiate itself in the market.



SMW: Can you describe the types of customers who would benefit most from Unbound Operations and Unbound Capabilities, and how each offering aligns with their unique needs and challenges?

CH: Our target market encompasses all of ST Engineering iDirect's current customer types, including global and regional satellite operators and global and regional satellite service providers.

With *Unbound Operations*, operators and service providers like its flexible service plans, usage-based pricing, and access to iDirect expert guidance.

With *Unbound Capabilities* Intuition's minimal upfront investment, scalability, faster time to market, reduced risk of obsolescence, and lifecycle support have been pivotal to the interest of satellite operators and service providers, large and small.

SMW: How does Intuition Unbound ensure seamless scalability for growing network demands, particularly in multi-orbit environments?

CH: Intuition Unbound ensures seamless scalability for growing multi-orbit networks through its cloud-native, virtualized architecture.

For example, network demand could change as a customer adds more terminals to the network or demand shifts regionally from season to season. As in the cruise industry, Unbound capabilities can aggregate usage across multiple networks and orbits.

SMW: While Intuition Unbound minimizes significant upfront investment and ongoing operational costs and facilitates rapid deployment, can customers still control their network in the same way as if they had their ground segment solution installed at their teleport?

CH: Whether customers purchase their own iDirect Intuition ground segment solution or subscribe to Intuition Unbound, they maintain full network autonomy with the flexibility to establish service plans, service levels, QoS, and more.

SMW: Companies like Kongsberg and Atlas service small satellite operators and dominate the teleport-as-a-service market with networks of ground stations around the globe. How does Intuition Unbound complement their offerings?

CH: They have ground segment solutions (Hubs) that they offer to their customers on a shared basis, typically operators of small LEO satellites.

If they want to provide the leading next-generation ground segment solution from iDirect to their customers, they can ramp up the service offering quickly using Intuition Unbound.

If they want to add new teleport locations to enhance coverage, they can do so with minimal investment by subscribing to *Unbound Capabilities*. In addition, *Unbound Operations* could also add to their unique selling

proposition by having iDirect proactively monitor the network as a value-added service.

SMW: How does the Intuition Unbound benefit customers in the long term?

CH: Intuition Unbound is a consultative approach to customer engagement in which iDirect invests the time and effort to understand customers' business goals and objectives and make the best recommendations possible.

It's a true partnership because we are constantly assessing the customer's business needs and technology requirements, freeing them to concentrate on running their business while iDirect manages the risk and future proofs their services. That's a significant change in value creation with long-term benefits. ■



Cynthia Harty is Senior Vice President of Corporate Development at ST Engineering iDirect. Her career began in the software applications industry and continued in the application software market with venture capital start-up-funded companies. In 2000, Cynthia joined iDirect through its venture capital funding source; she has remained with the company ever since.

Cynthia's expertise lies in operations and the introduction of new products, services and solutions to market, establishing channel and pricing strategy all aligning the operational plan