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Profile of Leslie Taylor

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Leslie Taylor
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Ms. Taylor's career focus is wireless and satellite telecommunications, including policy, regulation, licensing and spectrum allocations, internationally and domestically, particularly for new communications services.

The Strategic Planning Division's goal is to improve access to spectrum for both the Federal and non-Federal sectors and to ensure NTIA's policies support the introduction of new technologies and services. Leslie Taylor is the principal author of The Federal Strategic Spectrum Plan, published in 2008, a comprehensive description of U.S. Federal government spectrum use. See, http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/press/2008/SpectrumPlan_080320.html.

1) How did you get started in the satellite business?

During law school at a communications law firm I learned I liked the technical side of the subject as well as the legal and policy issues - but most of all, the fact that something new is always happening in telecommunications. After law school I went to the FCC and started with wireless communications, then moved to international and satellite communications.

2) How have you been involved in changes brought about in or by this business (innovations, technologies, services)?

Satellite communications is all about change - technology, services, policies, legal. I've seen the provision of satellite service go from large, single beam satellites providing service to very large earth stations to satellites providing services directly to consumers via small earth stations and tiny receivers used for mobile satellite service and digital audio satellite. These changes involved many challenges along the way, technical, economic, political, and regulatory. My role was to obtain frequency allocations and service rules for new satellite services, fighting incumbent systems (broadcasters, terrestrial wireless operators, etc.), and getting regulators to act.

3) What do you think was the greatest event/situation/opportunity you experienced?

I've had so many great experiences. The most gratifying project I worked on was obtaining international allocations and service rules for non-geostationary fixed satellite systems to operate co-frequency with geostationary fixed and broadcast satellite systems. This was on behalf of Alcatel Space which had developed a low-earth-orbit broadband satellite system, similarly to that of Teledesic. What was demonstrated at the 1997 and 2000 World Radiocommunication Conferences was very advanced methods for preventing interference and much more sophisticated ways of analyzing interference interactions. Even though Alcatel's SkyBridge system wasn't implemented (neither was Teledesic's), getting recognition of how multiple types of satellite systems could operate co-frequency, co-coverage, laid the groundwork for new approaches to interference analyses, which is paving the way for introduction of new wireless services, and providing a means to use the radiofrequency spectrum more efficiently.

4) What was the greatest obstacle?

The biggest obstacle I've faced has been at times losing confidence in my ability to make something happen. Fortunately, these times have been rare and transient. Working with many other talented and dedicated people, I have been able to meet almost all of my objectives. Don't ever give up. Instead, take a deep breath, write down your goals and your plan of action, and ask for help from family, friends or colleagues. You'll get there.

5) What do you see happening in the next five years in this industry?

Just when the telecom community is saying the satellite industry is not going to be a significant player in provision of new services, they're proven wrong. There will be more satellite service direct to consumers, including handheld digital audio, satellite/cellular phones, and more video distribution everywhere. And the satellite imaging business is taking on an increasingly vital role in navigation, weather forecasting, land use management. Satellites will make a major contribution to having a "greener" planet.

6) What advice do you have for women interested in entering the industry?

Establish personal and professional goals for yourself and plans of action. You can adjust as necessary. Work hard, play hard, stay healthy and maintain close ties with family and friends. Deliver what you promise or explain why you can't. Communicate to clients, superiors, colleagues and others. Ask for help when you need it.