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## Profile of Synette Tom

Mary Frost

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Synette Tom is director of marketing and sales for Space Systems/Loral (SS/L), the leader in high power commercial satellites. Synette is responsible for the marketing and sales of the company's communications satellites and systems in Southeast Asia. Prior to joining SS/L, Synette was with Hughes Space and Communications (now Boeing Satellite Systems) for over 17 years serving in various systems engineering and business development positions involving domestic and international commercial and government customers. Synette has over 20 years experience in the satellite industry.

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

I started in the satellite business designing digital electronics for satellites at Hughes Space and Communications. My first project was on Intelsat VI. Satellites got more exciting to me when I moved into systems engineering. Systems engineering helped me learn more about satellite applications and the benefits of satellite communications to provide telephony, television, internet, and data services around the world, especially to communities that have little to no access otherwise.

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

Throughout my career, I am thankful to have been surrounded by highly innovative people. These people have been my mentors, teammates, and customers. Together, leading edge solutions in satellite communications were developed to help improve communications services. When MEASAT was considering an Asian broadband network and I lead the business development team on our proposal efforts, I learned a lot more about advanced internet systems and businesses. This was much more than what I learned studying engineering.

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

The greatest opportunity for me is to work with very smart people that are passionate about the satellite industry.

4) What was the greatest obstacle?

I fortunately didn't really have any pinnacle obstacles in my career. When Space Systems/Loral offered me a position to lead marketing and sales in the Southeast Asia region, it was challenging for me to decide to leave Hughes Space and

Communications. Hughes had provided me with so many fantastic opportunities. They trained me for over 17 years and I have made many friends and long term business relationships there. I tend to be very loyal so it was a very difficult decision to leave. However, Space Systems/Loral provided me with a terrific opportunity to advance my career. Now I am part of the team at the company that is now the leading supplier of high power commercial communications satellites. I continue to learn and enjoy making new friends in the industry.

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

In the next five years, I believe there will be continued demand for capacity in the industry due to HDTV, broadband, mobile, and possibly government services. Secure, broadband communications could possibly be provided to the field using lower cost commercial bent pipe systems.

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

Engineering is an excellent major that can open many doors. Space Systems/Loral offers exciting and interesting high technology careers in the satellite communications industry with excellent salaries. I recognize that this issue is focused on women in space, but it doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman, just be passionate about what you do, love what you do, do the best you can do, and enjoy life.