

OBSTACLES



WELCOME

**turn adversity to advantage
in business and life**

Ralph de la Vega

President & CEO of AT&T Mobility
and Consumer Markets

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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Ninety Miles to Advantage



The de la Vega family at a beach house. *In the summer we would take vacations at the beach. In this picture, my mother is holding my sister, Barbara, while I enjoy an ice cream cone and show off my physique. That's my father in the background.*

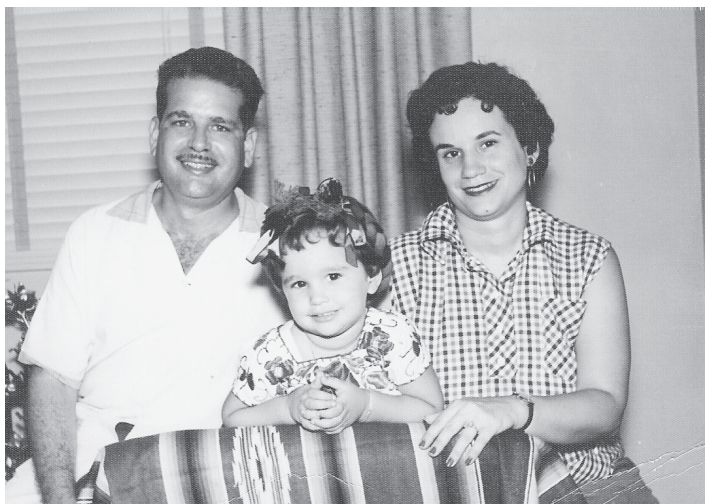


(Map courtesy of Central Intelligence Agency)

My journey began during the Cuban Revolution. Fidel Castro overthrew the government of Fulgencio Batista on January 1, 1959, and installed a socialist regime, dramatically changing the political, social, and economic fabric of the country. Located ninety miles from the United States, directly south of Key West Florida, Cuba has a population of 11 million people.



The de la Vega family in the late 1950s. My father, Rafael; my mother, Andrea; and my sister, Barbara. (In coordinated shirt, pants, and shoes, I appear to be on my best behavior.)



My wife, Maria, with her parents, José Joaquín and Berta Martínez.



At the Halloween party at St. George's School in Havana, Maria dressed as a cat (far right). The Castro government took control of the school, forcing the faculty to wear fatigues and teach propaganda. Berta, Maria's mother, resigned her teaching position.



Here is Maria at home in Cuba. On the bed is her favorite doll, a Mariquita Pérez doll made in Spain. It was one of the few possessions Maria had with her when preparing to board the Shirley Lykes in Havana Harbor. When a guard suggested tearing the doll's head off to look for contraband, Maria's tears moved him to return the doll unharmed.



One of my first pictures in the United States. Soon after I arrived in the United States, I had my picture taken at school. I remember the shirt I wore that day. It was my favorite and a prized possession at the time.



I was very lucky to have had a great second set of parents. Arnaldo and Ada Baez, who took me in while I waited for the rest of my family to flee Cuba, treated me as one of their own. The Baez children, Arnie and William, became like my own brothers. Pictured are Ada and Arnaldo with their son Arnie.

Obstacles Welcome

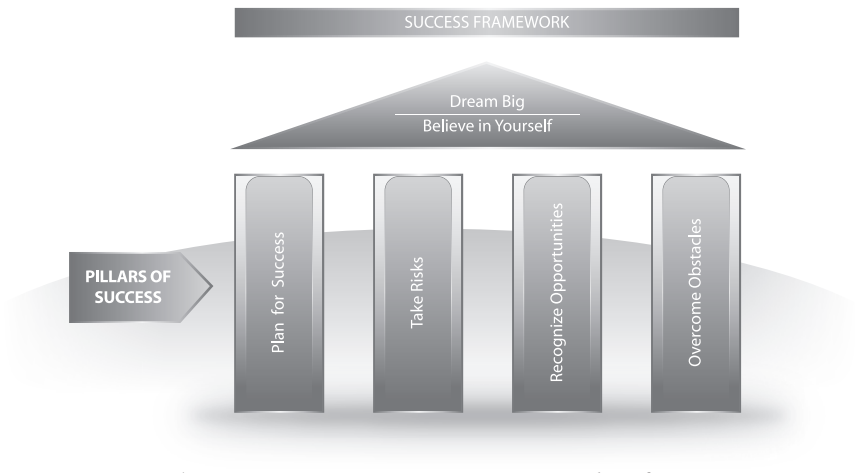


The track of Hurricane Andrew (courtesy of NOAA). The storm struck South Florida on August 24, 1992, with winds in excess of 155 miles per hour, devastating everything in its path.



(photo courtesy of AP)

The south end of South Florida was totally devastated. I had never seen damage of this nature before. Trees and power lines were down, roofs were gone, and complete subdivisions were demolished.



Opportunities in Disguise



connections
a bi-weekly publication for employees of BellSouth
Volume 3, Issue 1 January 22, 2002

BellSouth reaches milestone — 620,500 DSL subscribers

BellSouth and its employees were successful in achieving its 2001 broadband objective. The final tally was 620,500 DSL subscribers the last day of the year — 20,500 over goal.

"BellSouth employees proved themselves to be the best in the industry," said Ralph de la Vega, outgoing president of Broadband and Internet Services. "We set a very high bar for ourselves at the beginning of the year trying to go from 215,000 subscribers to over 600,000."

"But knowing how dedicated our employees are, we knew we could reach the mark. We are the industry broadband leader, and we're very proud of what our employees can do."

Last year BellSouth led the nation in DSL subscriber growth with 188 percent, DSL deployment with more than 70 percent of households

BellSouth DSL in 2001

- #1 in subscriber growth — 188%
- #1 in DSL deployment — more than 70% households eligible
- #1 in customer satisfaction among industry peer group

In the region DSL-eligible, and customer satisfaction that was recognized by several independent authorities.

At the end of 1999, BellSouth had approximately 30,000 broadband access lines in service. My team was charged with increasing the number of broadband subscribers to 200,000 by the end of 2000 and to 600,000 by the end of 2001. The headline above from the BellSouth Connections publication on January 2002 says it all. Mission accomplished!



(Courtesy AP)

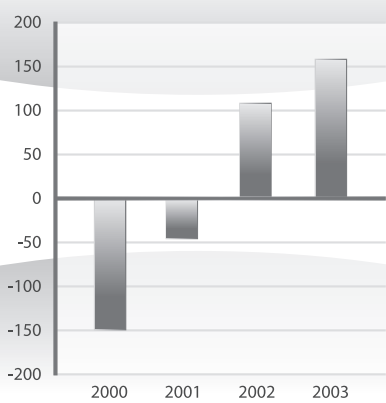
Violent demonstration in Buenos Aires, December 2001.



(Courtesy AP)

Demonstration in Caracas, October 2002

BellSouth Latin America Net Income (\$M)





Julia Diaz Gomez, my abuela (grandmother), was a mother of seven, a schoolteacher, and a poet. She loved to read poetry by José Martí, a poet and hero from the war of independence from Spain. Her advice to stay in school and get a degree made a huge difference in my future.

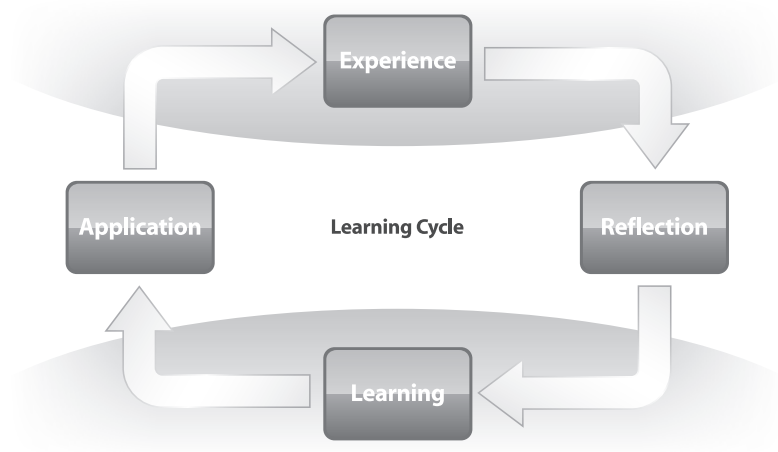


Me with my wife, Maria, and our sons, David and Mark, at Christmas. We are seated in front of a friend's fireplace, in Naperville, Illinois.



This is one of my favorite memories from the time we spent in Chicago, seeing my boys, David and Mark, playing in the snow.

Learn to Unlearn and Relearn



Step-by-Step

Create a Compelling Vision of the Future

Cingular Strategic Imperatives

**Build The Best
Network**

**Create Unmatched
Distribution**

**Provide Great
Customer Service**

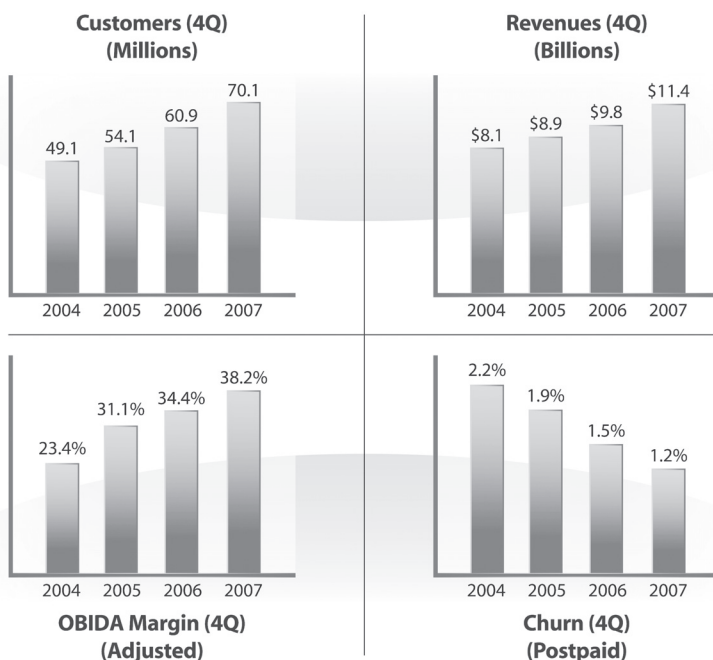
**Deliver Compelling
Products & Services**



✕ cingular[®]
WIRELESS



Celebrating the completion of the rebranding to Cingular Wireless. This picture was taken on November 14, 2004, around midnight. It was the final step in completing the merger-integration plans before launching the new company ahead of the holiday season on November 15, 2004.

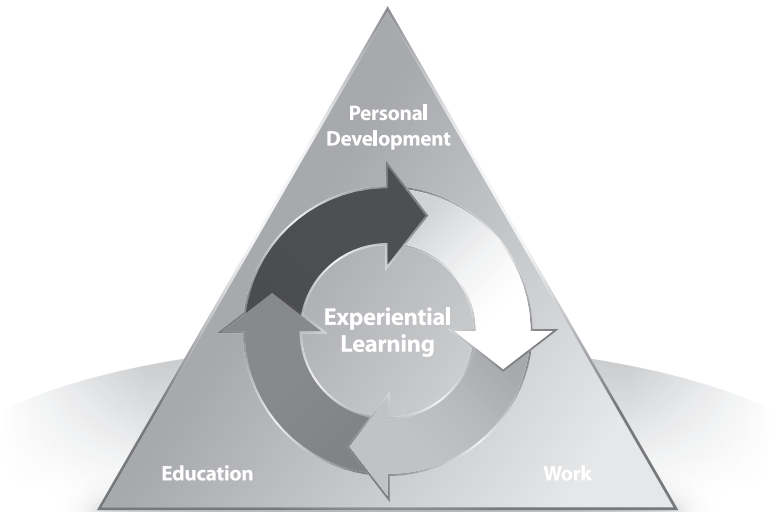


Cingular Wireless post-merger results. Operating income before depreciation and amortization (OBIDA) margin shown on the bottom left-hand chart.

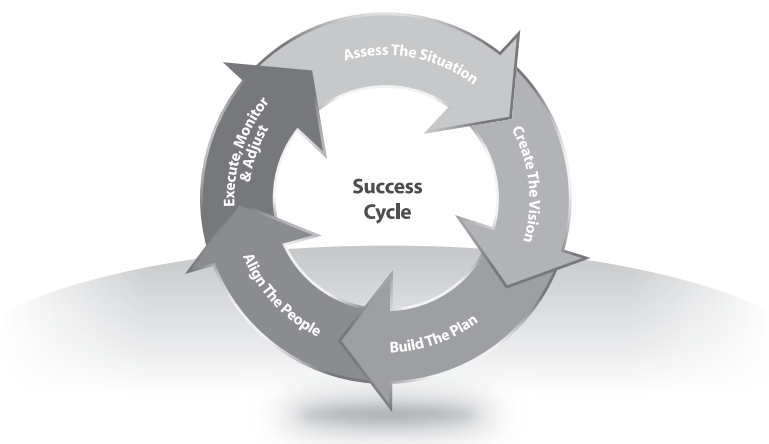
The Only Way to Win



Life's a Journey— Prepare for the Trip

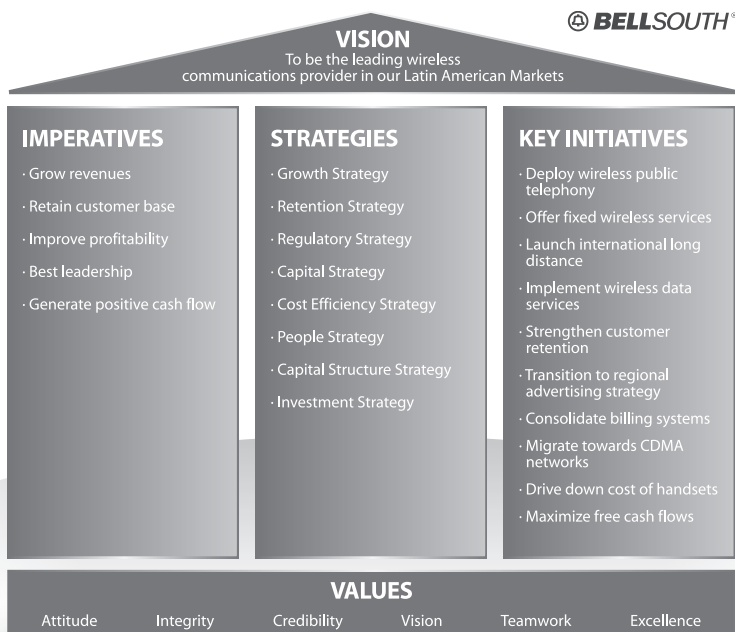


The Success Cycle



Transforming Vision into Results

BellSouth Latin America Operating Plan Elements



Cingular Wireless Operating Plan Elements



VISION

To be the most highly regarded wireless company in the world, with driving focus on sales and service

IMPERATIVES

- Build the best network
- Create unmatched distribution
- Provide great customer service
- Deliver compelling products and services

STRATEGIES

- Growth Strategy
- Retention Strategy
- Distribution Strategy
- Network Strategy
- Integration Strategy
- Cost & Capital Efficiency Strategy
- People Strategy

KEY INITIATIVES

- Grow targeted segments
- Build world-class B2B capabilities
- Implement customer life cycle management
- Expand national retail and alternate channels
- Improve company-owned retail and agent performance
- Build the nation's best network
- Improve end-to-end network reliability
- Execute merger integration plans
- Optimize call center operations
- Optimize organization for high performance

VALUES

Integrity

People

Performance

Teamwork

Customers

Maximizing People's Potential

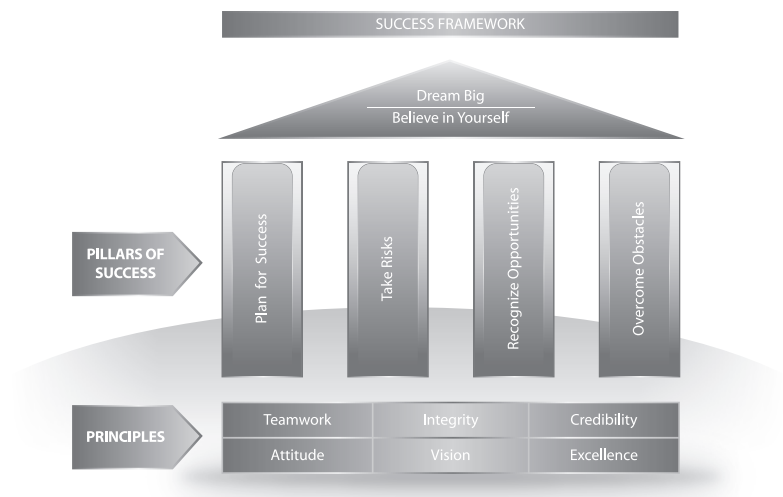
The 4 R's



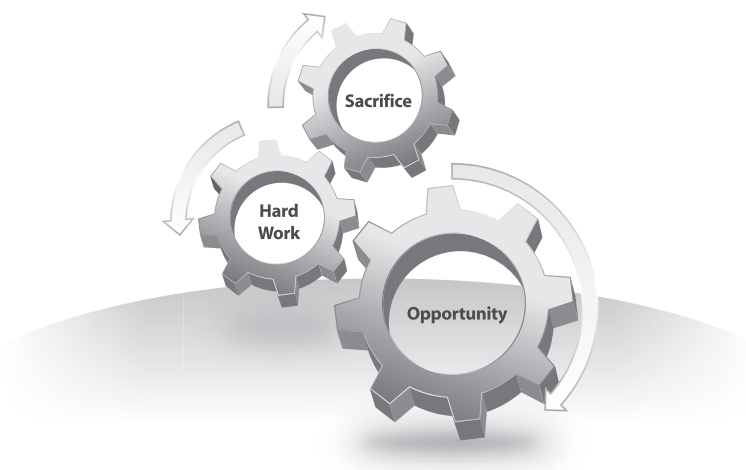
You Get What You Measure— and Then Some



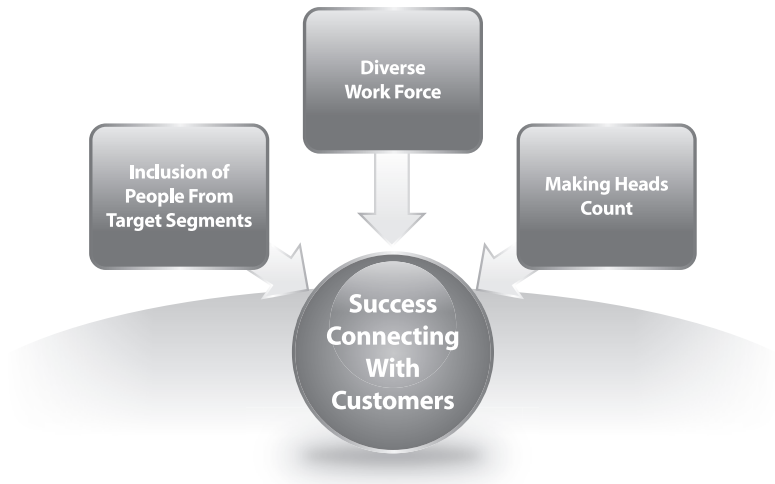
Spotting Opportunities



The Power of Sacrifice



Inclusion: It's About Making Heads Count



Make the Journey About More than You



Become the Leader You Want to Be



Level	Stage	Leadership Capabilities
1	Experiential	<p>Understands the organization's vision</p> <p>Learns from leadership experiences and adapts to new situations</p> <p>Develops beliefs set and principles</p> <p>Executes the organization's strategies, initiatives, and overall plan</p> <p>Works with teams to deliver results</p> <p>Develops self and provides coaching and feedback to others</p>
2	Executing	<p>Develops plan to achieve vision</p> <p>Delegates responsibility to execute strategies, initiatives, and the overall plan</p> <p>Selects the right people and assigns accountability</p> <p>Monitors implementation of plans and removes roadblocks</p> <p>Creates a winning environment and relationships</p>
3	Enabling	<p>Communicates vision and helps others understand it</p> <p>Enables others to execute strategies, initiatives, and the overall plan</p> <p>Overcomes resistance to change</p> <p>Develops people and creates development opportunities</p> <p>Delivers results and internalizes key measures</p> <p>Recognizes and rewards high performance</p>
4	Empowering	<p>Owens vision and helps others to own it</p> <p>Internalizes values and lives by them</p> <p>Empowers others to execute strategies, initiatives, and the overall plan</p> <p>Motivates people to achieve results</p> <p>Exceeds expectations defined by key measures and timetables</p> <p>Recognizes and rewards high performance</p>
5	Extraordinary	<p>Creates a compelling vision of the future</p> <p>Establishes values and lives by them</p> <p>Selects strategies and key initiatives and oversees the overall plan to achieve vision</p> <p>Establishes goals and priorities and focuses the organization</p> <p>Aligns and inspires people to achieve bold goals</p> <p>Establishes key measures and timetables and monitors results</p> <p>Creates a winning culture and then selects and develops leaders to sustain it</p>

Leaders

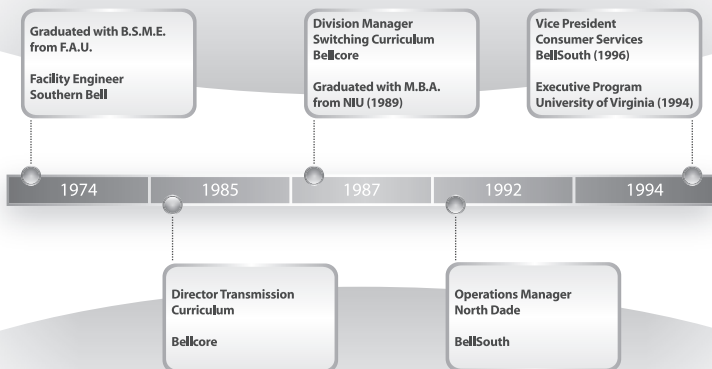
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- 1 Set the direction, create the vision
 - 2 Establish values and lead by them
 - 3 Select strategies and key initiatives
 - 4 Build plans to achieve vision
 - 5 Establish goals, priorities and focus
 - 6 Establish key metrics to measure progress
 - 7 Align and inspire people
 - 8 Empower and enable people to achieve vision
 - 9 Create winning culture
 - 10 Select, recruit and develop other leaders

APPENDIX

Career Timeline for Ralph de la Vega

I've been blessed with many interesting jobs in my life. It can be confusing to try and keep track of them all, so I designed this career timeline to help the reader correlate key positions in my

Ralph de la Vega - Career Timeline 1974-1994



career with my various Pivotal Points. Given all that has happened to me, and the number of opportunities I have had, I have broken down my career timeline into two phases. The first phase covers the first twenty years of my career, and the second phase covers what has happened since. The book covers the entire career timeline but focuses on the last dozen years (1997–2009).

Phase 1

1974—Facility Engineer, Southern Bell. Graduated with a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering (BSME) degree from Florida Atlantic University. I was hired right out of school by Southern Bell and placed in the Initial Management Development Program (IMDP) as a facility engineer in Plantation, Florida. The IMDP program was designed to develop high-potential college hires (proving my grandmother was right when she insisted that I continue on to college).

1985–1990—Director/Division Manager, Bellcore TEC. In 1985 I accepted a rotational assignment at the Bell Communications Research (Bellcore) Technical Education Center in Lisle, Illinois. At first I was responsible for the development of the transmission curriculum and the transmission laboratories at the center. Following this assignment I was promoted to be responsible for the switching curriculum and switching laboratories. During this time I was responsible for the development of the new multi-vendor switching labs. And while all this was going on, I earned my MBA from Northern Illinois University to help eliminate a “yes-but” (Yeah, Ralph is a good manager, but he doesn’t have an

advanced business degree) that might keep me from advancing further in the organization.

1992—Operations Manager, BellSouth. Responsible for network operations in North Dade County, Florida for BellSouth. The responsibilities included the engineering, installation, repair, and construction of the telecommunications network. This was one of the divisions that was impacted by Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

1994–1996—Vice President Consumer Services, BellSouth. Responsible for sales, service, repair, and collections of consumer services for the state of Florida for BellSouth. During this time, I completed the Darden Executive Program at the University of Virginia (1994). My time at Darden proved to be a great learning adventure and helped to further improve my educational background.

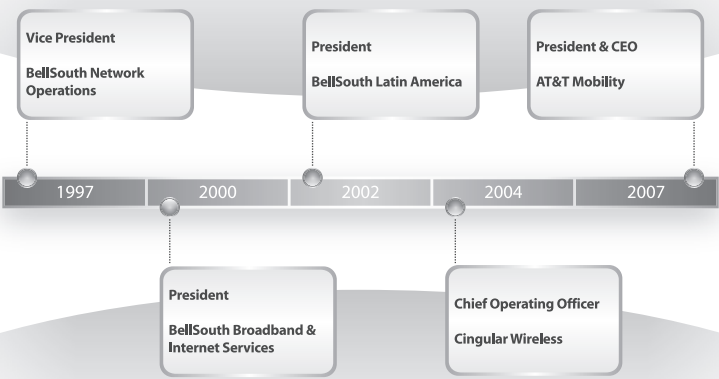
Phase 2

The next phase of my career has been filled with unique assignments that included starting a new business (broadband services), running wireless operations in eleven foreign countries (Latin America), integrating two companies as a result of the largest cash merger in U.S. history, and running AT&T Mobility, the wireless unit of AT&T. The career timeline for this phase is shown at the top of the next page.

1997—Vice President of Network Operations, BellSouth. In this position I was responsible for all network operations in the

states of Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. My job was to deliver more than \$4 billion in revenues while leading more than fifteen thousand people.

Ralph de la Vega - Career Timeline 1997-2007



2000—President of Broadband & Internet Service, BellSouth.

In this position I was responsible for rolling out broadband services throughout BellSouth’s territory. It was basically like running a startup company. I was charged with the task of leading a cross-functional team responsible for all aspects of the new technology. We started with thirty thousand customers at the end of 1999 and grew the business to more than six hundred thousand customers by the end of 2001, making us the fastest-growing broadband provider in the United States.

2002—President, BellSouth Latin America. In this capacity I was responsible for the wireless operations serving more than eleven million customers in eleven countries in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Venezuela, and Uruguay).

2004—Chief Operating Officer, Cingular Wireless. As the COO for Cingular wireless, I was responsible for sales, marketing, network operations, technology planning, and customer service. I was also responsible for the integration of Cingular Wireless and AT&T Wireless.

2007—President & Chief Executive Officer, AT&T Mobility. In this capacity I am responsible for the nationwide operations of AT&T Mobility, wireless unit of AT&T. AT&T Mobility generates over \$49 billion in revenues (on an annual basis) with over 77 million customers and more than seventy thousand employees. In October 2008, I also assumed responsibility for AT&T's consumer markets.

