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Leadership Corner

 [Full interview with Cliff Miyake](#)

Interviewed by [Curtis Lum](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

Q. Is the telecommunications business very competitive in Hawai'i?

A. Extremely. We compete in certain products with all the international carriers, such as AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, Quest, and locally we compete with Hawaiian Telcom and Pacific LightNet. The way we have success is we really focus on our customers and we really look to find out what they need to do to be successful, and we match our service offerings and support to what they need to ensure that they're successful, efficient and have good value dollar-wise. When we meet with folks we always let them know that we are able to be very independent, but still have the resources of a very large company.

Q. Can you explain Time Warner Telecom's relationship with Oceanic Time Warner?

A. We had a common parent. Time Warner Entertainment owned about half of our company, but in the past year they've divested their interest in us, so now we're very separately run operations. We're one of 75 operating cities for Time Warner Telecom.

Q. How much freedom and autonomy do you have?

A. We're given guidelines on how we should operate as far as financial goals and operational goals and we're pretty much left to manage ourselves very independently. But we always have a large organization with a lot of resources to fall back to. Other than the occasional trips to meetings to give them updates, we pretty much have our own operation to run.

Q. Are you allowed to implement your own ideas?

A. We usually have to make sure that it will work within the infrastructure that the company has, and as long as we can verify that then we are able to implement locally. Hawai'i is like a test bed for the company. There are a lot of things we do here where we're the pioneer, and if it works well then they take that back and roll it into the other 74 cities. Some of them deal with the newer technologies, hybrid-type service offerings, especially for small- to medium-sized businesses because of the type of client and market that we have in Hawai'i. We have at times taken the existing service offerings of the company and blended them together to come up with a hybrid solution.

Q. You recently reached a deal with filmmaker Edgy Lee to launch an Internet-based video service. Is that a new direction for the company?

A. We're collaborating with her new Pacific Network TV and in the initial start of it she's doing a nonprofit development, and what we're trying to do is collaborate and donate some services to help them get off the ground. It is a little bit different in that



Name: Cliff Miyake.

Age: 48.

Title: Vice president and general manager.

Organization: Time Warner Telecom.

Born: Honolulu.

High School: Kaimuki High School.

College: University of Hawai'i, bachelors in travel industry management; Roosevelt University, Chicago, masters in information systems.

Breakthrough job: Hired

what they offer has to do with mixed-media, or the "new media," and that's something that we have not really done before. What we are contributing is our Internet connections and the ability for them to place some equipment in a data center-type environment, which is what we do. We got involved because we wanted to return something back to the community, and because a lot of what she's going to be doing has educational aspects and is based around Hawai'i, it really struck our interests.

Q. What are some of the challenges you face as head of the company here?

A. This business is very dynamic, as far as pricing and service offerings, and because it's technology based, there's always the challenge of new technologies becoming available and finding a way to integrate that and continue to keep what we offer on target with all of those developments. It's pretty challenging. It's a lot of watching the industry, watching technological developments and learning. Always learning what's new, what's developing and figuring how to implement that in our day-to-day operations.

Q. What's the outlook for the industry?

A. One of the interesting things to watch is everything is kind of converging and that's been happening for a while — voice, video, Internet, data, all coming together. But I think one of the things that will develop is Hawai'i and it's place in the Pacific region and internationally. We keep an eye on that and we try and include that in our business modeling and the business that we do. There are going to be a couple of new trans-Pacific fiber optic systems coming into Hawai'i so all of us in the business are watching that and trying to figure out how that's going to change the business environment or how we can all do more business via those new connections.

Q. You have a degree in the travel industry. How did you move on to a career in technology?

A. The UH Travel Industry Management school gives you a very good foundation, a very good business foundation. Even if you decided not to stay in the travel industry, I found that I could easily take a lot of the concepts and with a little bit of additional training move into a different industry. When I was making the move, technology was changing, cell phones had just come out and it was a new and intriguing type of industry. So I focused on that and went back to school specific to systems and systems integration, which led me to this career.

Q. Have you set any goals for yourself?

A. Continuing to grow the business in Hawai'i, continuing to develop our people and the resources we have, and goals to try and contribute back to the community and make Hawai'i a better place. We are more and more trying to get involved. We endorse our employees to get involved. I was very active for a long while with the Nu'uuanu YMCA. I try to do some work with the Hawai'i Telecommunications Association. I look for other types of organizations that I can get involved in and make a contribution. It's very important to make the time and figure out how to fit that in and do it in a fashion that you're actually contributing.

Reach Curtis Lum at culum@honoluluadvertiser.com.

to work in the New Ventures Group at GTE Hawaiian Tel.

Mentor: Ernest Nishizaki, formerly of Sheraton hotels, and Ron Nishi, who was director of the New Ventures Group at GTE Hawaiian Tel.

Major challenge: Trying to keep a balance between work, home and other activities.

Hobbies: Reading and researching and trading stocks.

Books recently read: "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying," by Sogyal Rinpoche; "The Little Book That Beats the Market," by Joel Greenblatt; and "Managing with Aloha," by Rosa Say.

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