



LOUISIANA

Improving Lives, Strengthening Businesses, and Connecting Communities

An Interview with Glen F. Post, III
Chief Executive Officer and President, CenturyLink

EDITORS' NOTE Glen Post has served as Chief Executive Officer for 21 years. In less than 10 years, he led the company from the eighth to the third largest telecommunications company in the U.S. He serves on the National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC), and was previously Chairman of the Communications Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council (CSRIC). Post received his bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's degree in business administration from Louisiana Tech University.



Glen F. Post III

COMPANY BRIEF CenturyLink (centurylink.com) is a global leader in cloud infrastructure and hosted IT solutions for enterprise customers. CenturyLink provides data, voice, and managed services in local, national, and select international markets through its high-quality advanced fiber optic network and multiple data centers for businesses and consumers. The company also offers advanced entertainment services under the CenturyLink® Prism™ TV and DIRECTV brands. Headquartered in Monroe, Louisiana, CenturyLink is an S&P 500 company and is included among the Fortune 500 list of America's largest corporations.

How has CenturyLink evolved over the years?

It was founded as a rural, family-owned telephone company in the 1930s. Clark Williams, the founder, was given the company when he returned from World War II. They had 70 customers at that time.

The company grew by acquiring other small companies and focusing on improving service to customers.

It has been our vision to improve lives and strengthen businesses, and connect communities through the advanced services we offer. We really care about the communities we serve. They're not just a place where we do business – they're also our homes.

Since its beginning, the company's basic unifying principles have been our guide over the years – these include fairness, honesty, integrity, commitment to excellence, faith, positive attitude, respect, and perseverance. These are more than just words – leaders and employees have continuing discussions about these principles. They are given plaques and cards articulating these principles, and all of this emphasis makes

a difference. These principles create a foundation on which we can trust one another and grow our company.

How do you ensure you sustain those values as you grow?

It's difficult. When you buy companies significantly larger than yours, they have their own cultures.

We work diligently at maintaining our culture while changing the culture within the organizations we acquire. We have been successful, and our people embrace our culture.

Is your brand well understood?

We are working hard to create awareness by investing in branding activities and encouraging our employees to live the brand. We've grown rapidly, so we are trying hard to establish a more recognizable brand.

How hard is it to differentiate in this space?

We are on the path to reinventing ourselves. We are focusing on IP and IT solutions for residential and business customers, with less reliance on legacy voice services and other regulated services that have been shrinking.

We are now focusing on the growth segments in our industry: our nationwide fiber network, our strong local fiber footprint, and hosting and cloud capabilities, as well as our expanded IT solutions portfolio, all of which make it possible for CenturyLink to participate in the fastest growing segments of our industry.

It's a priority to provide quality solutions for customers – not just a service, a speed, or a technology, but to provide full solutions. We might not always have the highest speed in terms of our network, but we want to provide very strong solutions that meet customers' needs.

Is the focus on the larger corporations and is there also a focus on small entrepreneurial companies?

There is a focus on all business sizes in addition to our global enterprise customer base. We think our sweet spot is more the mid-size to large customer base. More than 60 percent of our revenues now come from our business customers.

What are the areas in which innovation is having the greatest impact?

We try to bring the latest technologies to our customers, but we don't want to sell them technology as much as a solution – key, strategic, high-bandwidth business network solutions, cloud and hosted IT solutions, and consumer broadband and video solutions.

We're working to develop and innovate in the solutions area. We want to take the telecommunications and IT work off our customers' plates and have them focus on what they do best.

Will your growth be organic or will it come mostly from acquisitions?

The past several years have seen the vast majority of our growth come from acquisitions. Organically, we have been losing voice customers and regulated revenues that were the foundation of our company for many years.

We have worked to limit those losses while investing in and expanding in areas of strategic revenue, in services that are growing rapidly, like our MPLS, Ethernet, Wavelength, and VoIP offerings. In addition, we are focused on offering hosting, cloud, and IT services, for which demand is growing rapidly. So we have changed our focus to these high-growth areas, and we expect revenue stabilization in 2015.

Have you assembled a leadership team that can be a differentiator?

Our most important asset is our people. They work with customers, create solutions, and lead through difficult economic and industry cycles.

We have a great team that has a huge amount of experience. We have folks who have come from many different backgrounds. We also have a lot of diversity, which is a great strength for us as an international company.

How large can the footprint of CenturyLink become?

Right now, we have more than 55 data centers, 14 of which are located outside the U.S. We have a 240,000 route-mile domestic fiber network and a 280,000 route mile international transport network.

Rather than just trying to push ourselves into new countries, we try to follow our customers. We have global customers who want network and data center capabilities, and there is no question the opportunities are significant. To grow our company, we have to take advantage of the demand for strategic services and international opportunities.

What advantages does Louisiana offer businesses located there?

From the governor to the legislature, this state has shown a desire to welcome businesses, and to encourage growth in a proven economic environment. The tax situation has changed dramatically – we have a favorable tax situation now. Louisiana has funds set aside to help businesses grow, and to create incentives for businesses to headquarter here. The local communities have been great to work with as well. ●