

Optimism Abounds At CES For Consumer Electronics Industry In '10

By [Eric Fisher](#), Staff Writer, SportsBusiness Journal

The Consumer Electronics Association, which produces the Int'l Consumer Electronics Show taking place in Las Vegas, Thursday projected that the consumer electronics industry will post slight growth in '10 with more than \$165B in U.S. shipment revenues. The projection arrives after the industry declined by 7.8% in '09, despite higher unit sales, marking the industry's first negative year in roughly two decades. CES President & CEO Gary Shapiro: "2009 was a difficult year, one none of us would wish to repeat. But we see optimism out there." Indeed, projected CES attendance this year of about 140,000 people is roughly 20,000 people more than the '09 event, and the convention halls were noticeably more crowded than last year.



Shapiro Expects Consumer Electronics Industry To Post Slight Gains In '10

3D HURDLES: 3D televisions, quickly established as the dominant story of CES, will play a significant role in that anticipated growth as the CEA projects that by '13, 25% of U.S. TV sets will be 3D-enabled. But even with the 3D optimism and excitement, several industry executives said that a steep learning curve exists. "There's still a lot to be learned, and it's still very easy to make bad 3D," said ESPN VP/Emerging Technology Anthony Bailey. "And you have to remember we're not talking about your grandfather's 3D. This is a totally different product we're talking about." Added BSKyB Dir of Product Development Brian Lenz, "I don't think you can underestimate how hard this still is and how much work is needed to do 3D well. So you're going to have to expect some bumps in the road." ESPN's 3D programming initiative, set to launch formally in June, will involve two more test efforts before then: a February 25 Harlem Globetrotters game in Orlando at ESPN's Wide World of Sports, and an undisclosed golf effort. The network's 3D effort at present does not have any signed carriage deals, and ESPN also remains in negotiations with the NFL, NBA and MLB to gain 3D rights to those sports. ESPN's planned 85 live events in 3D in the first year of activity will include World Cup soccer, college football and basketball and auto racing.

COUNTING HEARTBEATS: As expected, adidas yesterday formally launched its new miCoach personal training platform, highlighted by a \$139 Pacer unit and a \$66 Zone wristband. The devices track a variety of exercise-related data, such as heart rate and distance traveled, and when used in concert with an online platform developed by adidas, create a personalized workout plan that will provide verbal commands during exercise. The units will also be compatible with nearly every mp3 player, including the Apple iPod that is a fundamental part of the rival Nike Plus Trainer offering. Despite Nike's significant headstart in this space, adidas



adidas Formally Launches
miCoach Running Platform

execs believe they can quickly assume significant market share in what they see as a "fragmented" market. "We feel like we can get to 5 or 10 percent [market share] pretty quickly and see this first year as a real learning period," said Simon Drabble, director of adidas' interactive business unit. "We're being realistic, but at the same time, we see a major opportunity here."

NEULION/DISH: NeuLion and the Dish Network Thursday announced a multi-year partnership that will seek to greatly expand the realm of IPTV. In the deal, Dish will use NeuLion's existing IPTV infrastructure to deliver its roughly 180 international channels to U.S. customers who are unable to use a satellite dish due to either exposure or building code issues. Consumer availability for the new offering will begin in the early spring. While the agreement derives initially from the non-sports side of NeuLion's business, company executives said they intend to market its sports offerings to users of the IPTV-delivered Dish programming.

"There's unquestionably overlap, and a lot of it," said NeuLion Exec VP Chris Wagner. "It's very easy to see how somebody who subscribes to these programming packages might also be interested in things like the NFL and NHL. So we're definitely starting to cross-sell. This is a huge validation for us, and what we're talking about is a major satellite operator saying they also want to deliver content via IPTV, and that they want an Internet strategy. That's a big deal."

SPORTS SIGHTINGS: As in past years, sports execs and players were present at CES. Sharp once again leveraged its official sponsorship with MLB, scheduling show floor appearances with Yankees P Joba Chamberlain, Angels CF Torii Hunter, Brewers 1B Prince Fielder and Tigers P Rick Porcello. NBA partner Haier featured Basketball HOFer James Worthy and former Warriors exec and NBA All-Star Chris Mullin. Sports execs speaking on various CES panels included Bailey, fellow ESPN execs John Zehr and Damon Phillips, NBA Digital Senior VP/GM Bryan Perez, NBC Sports & Olympics Senior VP/Digital Media Perkins Miller and Jacked CEO Bryan Biniak.