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Comcast Spectacor bundles its brand

By Bob Fernandez
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Comcast Spectacor CEO Dave Scott says he had a moment of clarity at a dinner with Allentown's Brooks brothers in September.

Jim and Rob Brooks, owners of the Lehigh Valley Phantoms minor-league hockey team and operators of the just-opened PPL Center, had contracted with Comcast Spectacor for ticketing, arena management services, and food concessions at the new multipurpose venue — a triple play,

to borrow a phrase from the cable industry.

Why not market those related Comcast Spectacor services together under one brand, Scott wondered, instead of separately as Ovations food services, Paciolan ticketing, and Global Spectrum venue management?

That way, Comcast Spectacor, one of the nation's largest arena managers and owner of the Flyers and the Wells Fargo Center, could more easily bundle services for sports teams, stadium owners, and convention centers — as

it had with Jim and Rob Brooks.

To talk with clients and consumers to see whether the idea had legs, Comcast Spectacor hired marketing firm 160over90.

The Philadelphia-based firm found that it did and helped Comcast Spectacor develop an all-encompassing brand: Spectra, being launched at trade

See **SPECTRA** on A15

Dave Scott, CEO of Comcast Spectacor: "We can leverage the Spectra brand." DAVID

SWANSON / Staff Photographer



Spectra

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shows this summer.

"They were a house of brands, but they wanted to be a branded house that could cross-sell, optimize revenue, and press the organization forward," said Darryl Cilli, 160over90's cofounder and chief creative officer.

"With this go-to-market approach, we have the same people banging on the doors," said Scott, 62, a former executive vice president in Comcast's cable division who left retirement in December 2013 to run Comcast Spectacor.

Now, one person in sales can market arena management and food services, instead of separate salespeople selling them.

"We can leverage the Spectra brand," Scott said, adding the power of a unified advertising punch in trade publications such as Billboard, Venues Today, and the Sports Business Journal.

Last year, Comcast Spectacor — a joint venture of Comcast Corp. and Flyers owner Ed Snider based at the Wells Fargo Center — provided services to 15,000 concerts, sports contests, and other events attended by 24 million people in the United States, Canada, Abu Dhabi, and Singapore.

"Everyone is on the same page, and you don't have to worry about different agendas," Jim Brooks said of contracting the hat trick of services through Comcast Spectacor.

As arena manager, Brooks said, Comcast Spectacor books the talent acts. As ticketer, it sells the tickets and runs fan-engagement programs. And as food-services provider, it makes sure everyone's belly is full for the events.

Comcast Spectacor says it has a roster of 300 clients. Scott hopes to add 25 to 30 this year, with half buying bundles of services marketed under the Spectra brand.

The name itself is a nod to the "spectrum" of services Comcast Spectacor sells related to concerts, games and other big events — as well as to the beloved Spectrum arena in South Philadelphia that closed in 2009. It was so named because of the diversity of entertainment (concerts, hockey games, ice shows, the circus) presented there.

Comcast Spectacor does not release revenue figures, but it's clearly a big company in a low-margin, high-volume business. Its ticketing operation is the nation's second-largest after Ticketmaster, and it competes with Philadelphia food-services giant Aramark, Los Angeles-based AEG, and Conshohocken's SMG.

Scott, who had a two-decade career at Comcast's cable division and retired to Florida, was asked to lead Comcast Spectacor after Peter Luukko, Snider's longtime business partner and ally, resigned in 2013.

Scott now splits his time between his Florida home and an Old City condo. He is president and chief executive officer; Snider is chairman and managing partner.

Snider stays involved in Comcast Spectacor operations and the Flyers.

"That's Ed's baby," Scott said of the hockey team. "I work on the business side of the Flyers but less so on the team side of it."

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Comcast-Spectacor unifies three business units under one brand

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Comcast-Spectacor announced Monday that its business units Global Spectrum, Ovations Food Services, Paciolan, and Digital Services will operate under one new brand called Spectra.

Spectra will serve over 300 clients globally in the event industry. The brand was formed, with the help of Philadelphia-based agency 160over90, in an effort to simplify event management “from the moment one buys a ticket on a mobile device ... to the personalized offer received from a venue sponsor after an event,” Comcast-Spectacor COO David A. Scott said in a press release.

The goal was also to increase client accessibility in a constantly changing industry.

Scott believes the integrated approach behind Spectra is the reason Comcast-Spectacor has grown from relations with venues up and down the east coast.

In Philadelphia, Spectra business units are involved in the Wells Fargo Center, the Liacouras Center at Temple University, PPL Park in Chester, Pa., and many others.



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David A. Scott, president and chief operating officer at Comcast-Spectacor