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Hughes and EKN Research Launch Online Tools to Benchmark Strategic Network Capabilities

New tools based on EKN's survey of more than 120 retailers and restaurants

GERMANTOWN, Md., Dec. 15, 2015 /PRNewswire/ --[Hughes Network Systems](#), LLC (Hughes), the world's leading provider of broadband satellite solutions and a major supplier of managed network services, has partnered with EKN Research, a research and advisory firm focused on business-technology insights, to deliver new online tools for the retail, consumer goods, travel and hospitality industries. The new tools enable companies to benchmark their networks against peers and gain valuable insights on how to improve infrastructures to deliver a better customer/guest experience, improve associate/team member effectiveness and streamline operations.



Research Results

While RFID, endless aisle and Bluetooth Beacons are among the network-based technologies most often talked about to influence customers' experiences and satisfaction, EKN's research found they are also the top three that most retailers cannot adequately support with their current networks. For restaurants, in particular, the research showed that nine out of 10 technology investments rely on the network and directly impact the customer experience and store/restaurant revenue.

"Retailers and restaurants are looking to offer a richer, more seamless in-branch customer experience to their digital-savvy consumers," said Ricardo Belmar, director product marketing, North America at Hughes. "Initiatives such as tabletop ordering, mobile-enabled sales associates and wait staffs, and in-store/restaurant smartphone apps—or cloud-based core applications, such as point-of-sale, ship-from-store, associate training, and workforce management—are all essential to compete and win. Hughes sponsored this research to highlight the performance and quality required of the underlying network to support these new initiatives at the outset. Otherwise, customer satisfaction and profitability are at risk."

Girijesh Agarwal, vice president of strategy at EKN, commented, "We are very excited to make these tools and the research behind them available to all retailers and restaurants interested in exploring the business-value impact of a smarter network. They are designed to help business and technology executives improve collaboration, and ultimately elevate the role of in-store network infrastructure to being an active ingredient in a brand's experience strategy."

EKN On-line Tools

The free [EKN QuickScan](#) provides retailers and restaurants a quick, informative assessment of how their networks are positioned to deliver new value-added services and how they stack up against their peers. Realizing that customer experience is significantly impacted by the underlying network infrastructure,

EKN has also developed a [Network ROI assessment](#) tool designed for both business and technology stakeholders. The Network ROI is a complementary "next step" from the short QuickScan. Unlike the QuickScan, the Network ROI tool takes into account the particular format, customer experience, brand promise and current network maturity.

The Network ROI tool will help business users benchmark their network capability, as well as assess the business value impact of a stronger, smarter network, and make actionable recommendations. Operators interested in actionable insights can [sign up here](#) for their free deep dive [Network ROI assessment](#), as well as to get a copy of EKN's unique point of view reports for Retail and Restaurants entitled: '[Elevating the Customer Experience - Why the Network Matters](#)'.

Visit Hughes at NRF, [Retail's BIG SHOW](#), January 17-20, 2016, at the Javits Convention Center in New York City, booth 3943, to speak with a retail subject matter expert and see first-hand what insights you can gain from the EKN Network ROI tool.

About Hughes Network Systems

Hughes Network Systems, LLC (Hughes) is the global leader in satellite broadband for home and office, delivering innovative solutions and a comprehensive suite of HughesON™ managed services for enterprises and governments worldwide. HughesNet® is the #1 high-speed satellite Internet service in the marketplace, with offerings to suit every budget. To date, Hughes has shipped more than 5 million systems to customers in over 100 countries, representing approximately 50 percent market share. Its products employ global standards approved by the TIA, ETSI and ITU organizations, including IPoS/DVB-S2, RSM-A, and GMR-1.

Headquartered outside Washington, D.C., in Germantown, Maryland, USA, Hughes operates sales and support offices worldwide, and is a wholly owned subsidiary of EchoStar Corporation (NASDAQ: SATS), a premier global provider of satellite operations and digital TV solutions. For additional information about Hughes, please visit www.hughes.com.

About EchoStar

EchoStar Corporation (NASDAQ: SATS) is a premier global provider of satellite and video delivery solutions. Headquartered in Englewood, Colo., and conducting business around the globe, EchoStar is a pioneer in secure communications technologies through its EchoStar Satellite Services, EchoStar Technologies Corporation and Hughes Network Systems business segments. For more information, visit echostar.com. Follow [@EchoStar](https://twitter.com/EchoStar) on Twitter.

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