

# 2015 Frost & Sullivan Lifetime Achievement Award

## Roberto Ricossa, VP and Managing Director of Aruba Networks Latin America

The 2015 Frost & Sullivan Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to Roberto Ricossa, Vice President and Managing Director of Aruba Networks Latin America. This award is in recognition of Roberto Ricossa's significant leadership through visionary innovation and notable achievements in advanced business strategies.

### **A Man to Watch: Roberto Ricossa and His Impact in Business Strategies**

Roberto Ricossa is a member of the American Marketing Association and HITEC, an organization created for promoting Hispanic executives across multinationals and in the United States. He has received numerous Kellogg certifications in marketing and technical certifications from the vendors he has worked with and is an avid supporter of various charities including the Ronald McDonald House of Charity. Throughout his career, Ricossa has made his mark on contemporary marketing and business strategies of large conglomerates worldwide. Driven by his passion to be a prodigious leader, Ricossa has received numerous awards and recognitions for his contributions to companies such as Anixter, Nortel, Avaya, and his present position at Aruba Networks.

### **A Foot in the Door: Leadership in Anixter Mexico Leads to Award by Nortel**

Ricossa was born in 1969 in Mexico City. He graduated from the Ibero University in Mexico with a Bachelor of Science in industrial engineering. While working for a local reseller during school, Ricossa realized that he did not have to be in a factory to improve technology; rather, he could get involved in the sales and marketing processes to improve these technologies. After graduation, Ricossa set his sights on Anixter Mexico, a multi-billion dollar company, and began working at Anixter Mexico in 1993 to gain insight into big business processes.

Ricossa set himself apart from his co-workers at Anixter by becoming a dedicated mentor, trainer, and leader. His training methods were so successful that he created the first training center in Anixter Mexico, which is still operational today. His leadership strategy stresses the importance of teamwork and collaboration, and uses a no talk-down methodology in his teams. He loves to use the following analogy: "We are all atoms that are inside a molecule, connected to each other." He has an open-door, open-dialogue policy that has served him well in the leadership positions he has had throughout his more than 20 years of experience.

His dedication to leadership and the company earned him a promotion to Sales and Marketing Director of Networking Solutions in Latin America, where he developed a close relationship with supplier Nortel and won the Nortel Leadership Award. This is an impressive recognition and the first time the award was given to someone who did not work directly for Nortel.

### **Leadership at Nortel and Changing the Relationship between Sales and Marketing**

In 2002, he officially joined Nortel as the Enterprise Marketing Director for the Caribbean and Latin America, eventually moving up to the Marketing Vice President for the region, and later to become Vice President of Field Marketing for the Americas, from Canada to Argentina. Developer of multiple customer facing activities, including the Experience event, Nortel Test Drive, and responsible for the exceptional loyalty and incentive program for channel partners –ClickandWin, Ricossa shone bright through his entire stay at Nortel. In addition to these contributions, Ricossa was a part of a “think-tank” system of 14 hand-picked professionals, called the Executive Edge Program, aiming to “build future leaders” and generate more success for Nortel. He focused exclusively on bridging a collaborative relationship between the sales and marketing team, an ideology he would pass on in his future work.

### **Continued Leadership at Avaya and Creating Avaya Evolutions**

With the acquisition of Nortel by Avaya, a worldwide communications company, Ricossa continued his professional excellence as the Channel Market leader from the end of 2009 to 2010 and moved into a bigger leadership role as the Vice President of Channel Sales, Strategy and Marketing for the Americas International Theater. In line with selling customer solutions, Ricossa and his team sought out Chief Information Officers (CIO) to attend a dialogue regarding their current and prospective business strategies. This event, called the CIO forum, featured speakers and key analysts from around the industries; Frost & Sullivan was one of the key participants.

Ricossa was named the Vice President of Americas in 2012; at that time, he and his team exported globally the revolutionary event, Avaya Evolutions. Avaya Evolutions is a customer-facing platform that started in Mexico, and soon expanded into multiple countries. Avaya Evolutions featured talks by top customers and prospects, discussing the current situation of customer engagement solutions, and what can happen down the line. The most recent event held in Mexico featured over 3,500 participants which had impressive speakers, including Steve Wozniak, the Co-founder of Apple, grace the stage.

Ricossa went on to become the Vice President of Marketing & Inside Sales from 2012 to 2014, allowing him to eventually take a large role as the Worldwide Sales Leader. He handled this large amount of responsibility and work with grace, remaining attentive to the challenge of multiple time zones and different cultures of the multi-person team under his charge.

### **The Attention of the Internationalist**

It was at Avaya that Ricossa caught the attention of The Internationalist, a worldwide publication showcasing marketing talent. During his stretch at Avaya, Ricossa earned a spot in the “Top 50 Marketers in Latin America” from 2011 to 2013, and was also recognized as one of the “Top 100 Worldwide Marketing Leaders.” In 2014, he traveled to New York and brushed elbows with worldwide industry leaders such as Coca-Cola and McDonald’s for his “Internationalist of the Year” award. This recognition brought him into the inner circle of some of the most influential business leaders of the times.

### **The Name of the Game Is Changing, and Marketing Has to Take Notice**

Anyone who speaks to Ricossa can instantly recognize the level of passion he has for business strategies. The most important thing that Ricossa highlights about marketing is that it is an investment, rather than a cost. Ricossa has handled his top position in marketing and sales with the idea that they are connected in an action-reaction relationship. Yet, in order to create this catalyst, you must have a clear message; “marketing is like a joke, if you have to explain it, it won’t work.”

### **Impacting the Latin American Market**

Ricossa’s leadership at Aruba Networks as the Managing Director and Vice President of Latin America is not only influencing the success of Aruba Networks (recently made a Hewlett-Packard company), but the entire Latin American market. He is constantly contributing to the WhatsApp group of business leaders and sharing his take on successful business strategies with publications like The Internationalist and Portada, a leading news and analysis center for the Latin American marketing and media space. Frost & Sullivan predicts that the Internet of Things, Big Data, and Bring Your Own Device are growing trends in the Latin American market. Ricossa wants his customers and companies to understand that they can grow their business with the mobile customer experience, but it cannot be done without mobility solutions. Moreover, Ricossa recognizes the warm culture of Latin America, and encourages businesses to take a more personal approach in targeting their customers, integrating mobile engagement since the mobile devices penetration in the region is rising.

## Keep Yourself Happy, and Your Business Will Reflect that Attitude

A happy man, Ricossa never walks into the office without his “Good morning in the morning!” ritual. He is a firm believer in having and promoting a positive attitude, regardless of the business or personal struggles he may experience. Ricossa remembers that someone once told him that he should be the Company’s CMO, relating it to becoming the chief motivational officer. A practice that should be highlighted in regards to his attitude toward work is the annual barbeque he hosts with his former Nortel co-workers year after year. This gesture is a reflection of the company culture he succeeded in creating—another family outside the company. Ricossa is a family man; he grew up with 6 siblings and has 2 twin daughters in high school. A self-proclaimed red wine lover, Ricossa loves getting together with friends for a monthly “wine tasting” club. Out of everything he does, he enjoys being with his family most, and strives to create the best lives for his 2 daughters and loving wife.

## Conclusion

Ricossa would never describe himself as the “marketing guy”, instead, he is the individual that clearly understands the power of marketing in a business that most do not. He has been through company bankruptcies, acquisitions, mergers, international moves, and other personal challenges. Yet, Ricossa is always a consummate professional in his craft, keeping in mind the wise Latin words his grandfather taught him while in combat during World War I, “Flectar Non Frectar; I may bend, but I won’t break.”

The 2015 Frost & Sullivan Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes Roberto Ricossa’s constant dedication to improving business strategies for Latin America’s notable telecom companies, leadership techniques, and visionary innovation in the global marketplace.

## Award Description

The Frost & Sullivan Lifetime Achievement Award is bestowed each year upon the individual whose career is characterized by a legacy rich in accomplishment and positive influence. This Award acknowledges the person’s vision, style of management, and dedication to making a difference to his/her industry that have been instrumental in spurring excellence and innovative solutions for the community. Frost & Sullivan seeks to identify an individual whose risk-taking and leadership traits have had a profound effect on performance of the company or the industry as a whole, and stand out among his/her peers. The Award recipient has distinguished himself/herself from competitors by pursuing a competitive roadmap that has resulted in propelling or sustaining the company’s market position. This Award also identifies a humanitarian, who has sought to serve the community through local initiatives, awareness building, and innovative programs.

## Measurement Criteria

In addition to the methodology described above, there are specific criteria used in determining the Frost & Sullivan Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. The recipient of this Award has excelled based on several of the following criteria:

- History of serving the industry
- Impact on organization and contribution to society
- Leadership/risk-taking/vision or decision that has either served as the catalyst for market growth/sustaining market share or company image
- Leadership that created industry standards in operations, product quality, processes, or other notable benchmarks
- Degree of participation in community service programs (Boys/Girls Clubs, homeless activities, United Way, and others) or environmental activities (spreading environmental awareness)
- Educator/ Philanthropist/Industry Pioneer/Revolutionist
- Long standing record of operational excellence and professionalism (such as excellence in functions and operations related to growth/establishment/initiation of company/project/inventions) through career
- Effective development and implementation of a new business model/effective industry growth programs/plans for the sustainment/development of company image (would showcase the resourcefulness of the individual)
- Brand Strengthening: demonstrates Award recipient's ability to strengthen and enhance the brand of the companies that he has worked with towards making them more identifiable to existing and potential customers
- Professional recognition

## About Frost & Sullivan

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