

new people

Wireless Networking

Sunnyvale, Calif.

Venturi Wireless Names Former SnapTrack Executive, Aims For AsiaBy [Rachel Nielsen](#) 12/05/2005

Venturi Wireless Inc., whose software technology is designed to let wireless operators get better data performance and, in turn, more economy from their vastly expensive networks, is naming Bret Sewell chief executive.

Sewell's first day with the company was Nov. 14, he said in an interview.

He said part of his plan for Venturi is to do what SnapTrack Inc., one of his previous wireless employers, did: make the aggressive pursuit of customers in South Korea and Japan its first priority.

Those markets tend to be "timeshifted" ahead of Europe and the U.S., he said, meaning they tend to have more-advanced wireless data applications and more subscribers using those applications.

"I'm very certain that when we come out of the chute in 2006, the [South] Korean market and the Japanese market are going to be very high on our priority list," he said.

Sewell takes the spot formerly held by John Fazio, who left the company roughly three months ago and is now chief executive of Innopath Software, a venture-backed developer of cellphone technology.

The company also sells in Europe and the U.S., and its customers include Verizon Wireless and Japan's Willcom.

Sewell said he didn't have details of Fazio's departure. Both Venturi and Innopath are backed by Intel Capital.

Sewell said he has spent most of his career in the wireless industry. His most recent full-time corporate post was with Kiwi Networks Inc., a broadband wireless systems company where he was CEO and president from 2003 to 2004. (Kiwi was sold to wireless local-area network system provider Colubris Networks Inc. in January of this year.)

Prior to Kiwi, Sewell worked with SnapTrack, a wireless-assisted global positioning system company. He joined SnapTrack in 1997 and was its vice president of worldwide sales and customers operations. SnapTrack was acquired by Qualcomm Inc. in 2000, and Sewell was president of the subsidiary until 2003.

Earlier, from 1991 to 1995, he worked at Octel Communications Corp., a voice-messaging company that Lucent Technologies Inc. acquired in 1997. He started with Octel as general manager of the Octel Asia-Pacific unit. He then became president of its Japan subsidiary, Octel Communications KK.

More recently, between leaving Kiwi and joining Venturi, Sewell was an entrepreneur-in-residence at Benchmark Capital, an investor in SnapTrack, he said.

He also had contacts with other venture firms. He joined Venturi in part because of his relationship with Storm Ventures, a Venturi backer where he is familiar with a number of investment partners, he said.

To date Venturi has raised \$23 million in funding. Its last round of funding was a \$10 million Series C closed in January. That round was led by InterWest Partners. Besides InterWest, Intel Capital and Storm Ventures, other investors in the company include Novus Ventures and Horizon Ventures.

The company isn't likely to raise another round of funding, said Sewell.

Venturi, based in Sunnyvale, Calif., has about 60 employees, the new CEO said.