Qualcomm's challenge is to sustain its wireless success

By Catherine Ivey

SAN DIEGO — Eight years ago, when Qualcomm Inc. introduced the concept of code division multiple access for cell phones, few outsiders thought it could be successful.

Today, Qualcomm's technology is in the hands of 99 percent of the world's wireless subscribers and the company is fiercely working to expand into new markets including India and China.

With ambitions for growth abroad, record revenues and a high stock price, Qualcomm is a distinctly divided company for shareholders, Qualcomm Inc., chief of one of the few high-tech companies that have defied Wall Street's expectations.

The stock has risen steadily in the past six months, a 28.9 percent increase for the first time since the 300 percent market boost the company forfeited after it had threatened to sue major cellular equipment makers.

"Qualcomm is a beacon of hope that the long-term benefits of technology will be realized," said Ben Rosenfield, managing director of Stratechery Inc., a technology research firm.

"They've got growth. They've got profit margins that are better than most other vendors. They're generating very good cash flow. In fact, the one thing we don't have a good answer on is how sustainable that is.

"In commercialization, Qualcomm has emerged as a winner in terms of how well it has managed to take the technology to the world," said Stratechery analyst Sam Altman, who has followed the company for three years.

"When you start with Qualcomm, only people in San Diego believe it was successful," said analyst Roger Farrow of the Yankee Group, a telecommunications research firm. "They have proven the world wrong, according to the standards to distinguish such calls, a process that allows more customers to share the airwaves.

"When they first started with Qualcomm, only people in San Diego believed it was successful," said analyst Roger Farrow of the Yankee Group, a telecommunications research firm. "They have proven the world wrong, according to the standards of what we know about spectrum efficiency.

Nonprofit group helps led off software workers improve their skills

By Jonathan C. W. Cox

San Diego 10/15/85

As James White scooted from one conference to another at MicroSoft Corp.'s operating conference last week, he was wearing a suit and tie, and getting his pink slip back in New York City.

White learned in an e-mail message that his position was eliminated from the company.

He was off from a start up where he wrote computer software codes for the firm that hired him, and White knew he could find work faster if he were involved in the latest technology.

"I thought, wouldn't it be nice if I could find other people who are interested in software development and actually hire them in the recent past," said White, a software developer at San Diego's Infini Tech Inc., which makes software for video games.

"I went to a conference, and then hired me immediately," White said. "I think that's why companies have to be involved in the latest technology.

"I think today's the changing world and we should be involved in the latest technology."