

Precision Recruiting Helps e|net Manage and Power Ireland's Telecom Growth

Challenges

e|net had the Irish government approvals, the financing and the technology to effect vast improvements in the outlying regions' telecommunication capabilities. But results were not occurring as fast as e|net's Board felt was necessary.

Solution

The e|net Board brought in WHO42 of Dublin, Ireland, to accomplish an unusual search. The growing company needed a person who had the vision to plan big, the technology skills to make those plans workable, and the personal leadership to lead by doing.

Results

- 300 percent increase in revenue
- Nine MANs customers has expanded to 32
- Manages Ireland's largest fibre network: 667 kilometers
- Latest €30-million contract links four cities to North America
- Lower operating and marketing costs, higher network reliability



Company Description:

Limerick-based e|net is Ireland's only operator-neutral wholesale telecommunications provider. e|net's charter is to manage Ireland's MAN's and to bring modern telecommunications to regions outlying Dublin.

Selling through MANs, the e|net infrastructure now reaches 27 outlying towns and has government's backing to reach another 90. Project Kelvin, a recent €30-million agreement, connects four cities to North America by high-speed digital link.

Challenges

The trust and support of government and the operator community is vital for the successful growth of a new wholesale telecoms company and can only be secured by efficiently serving Ireland's complex telecoms structure.

In 2000, privatisation of a major telecoms player threatened to slow Ireland's telecommunications expansion—exactly at a time when outlying regions needed a more efficient service to compete on the global market. Michael Tiernan responded by establishing E-Nasc Eireann Teoranta (e|net) in Limerick to accelerate the rollout of broadband access to outlying cities and towns in Ireland. e|net

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succeeded in a competitive tender winning a 15-year license as the Managed Services Entity for Phase One of Ireland's broadband infrastructure rollout.

e|net continued to grow but was faced with a major challenge. Its capabilities were stretched but potential remained unfulfilled. The company needed new leadership with experience in planning, goal management and hands-on leadership.

Solutions

Michael Tiernan and the e|net Board employed international search firm WHO42 to find and recruit a talented candidate who could structure and ramp up growth. "Who42 are Ireland's best in this industry. They were the go-to guys," says Eoin O'Driscoll, e|net Chairman.

WHO42 and the e|net Board carefully outlined the experience and personality necessary. The position description dictated that the new CEO advance the company from its "technology build" stage through development and implementation of a commercial go-to-market strategy. Implicit in this description was e|net's need for a candidate who inspired and exemplified the bold action that growth demanded.

WHO42 began extensive data-gathering on relevant candidates in Ireland, UK and the Continent. Its well-organized search methods monitored progress and helped validate the eventual decision to recruit and persuade Conal Henry to come aboard as Chief Executive Officer.

Results

Mr. Henry joined e|net in April 2006 and immediately took steps to transform the business. His experience as Managing Director of Energis Ireland and previous experience with Ryanair, Procter & Gamble, Asda Stores and First Active had demonstrated his passion and talent for initiating proactive change.

Neil Pope, Founding Director at WHO42, explains, "Conal's law degree from Queen's University Belfast and his background in Chartered Management Accountancy ensured he would create workable business plans. More important, Conal is the man to drive those plans through any obstacle course."

Henry says he pursued the opportunity because, "e|net had a good license, participatory investors, and untapped potential. It primarily needed a solid and detailed strategy so its success wouldn't depend

just on good luck. I saw that e|net and I could make a pivotal, profitable difference.”

Henry created a new business model, specifying early, “What do we sell and to whom? And what differentiates us? We couldn’t be all things to all parties, so we tightly defined our markets and services—and we stick to that charter.” He laid out specific targets and realistic ways managers could meet them. When a few staff didn’t take a sufficiently causative approach, he replaced them.

Henry has now led e|net through a 300 percent increase in revenue. He helped win a major expansion of the regions’ infrastructure by government and has increased nine telecom customers to 32, ranging from family-run ISPs to companies the size of Verizon. Thanks to focusing company efforts, this was accomplished with fewer staff and a mere 10 percent of the previous marketing budget.

Key to growth was building an exceptionally strong management team. Henry retained WHO42 to recruit Sales Director Martin Keogh in late 2007 and Service Delivery Director Leo Clancy in November 2008.

“In the past,” says Henry, “we weren’t as proactive in deal-making as we might have been. We left money on the table and kept services in our pocket that people could have used. Keogh has changed that. He’ll bring an underlying heartbeat of new, big-ticket deals each quarter. Then we’ll need to continue improving our best-in-class technical platform, which is where Leo comes in.

“These were key positions,” says Henry, “so I didn’t even consider other recruiting firms. I’ve heard every possible recruiting pitch, but WHO42 have the best address book in the country and their recruitment process is rigorous. They think through the big picture, keep the process flexible, operate by it, and use it to police their own results. Thanks to WHO42, our management capability is far ahead of our size.”

Three pinpoint searches by WHO42 have helped e|net now manage the largest fibre optic network in Ireland: 667 kilometers of lit fibre extending to 27 towns and cities. This infrastructure is available to telecoms operators that provide telephone, television, internet, mobile, and VOIP services. e|net has lowered costs, raised reliability and increased the speed of telecommunications in the regions, enabling residential and business users to “close the digital divide” and better compete in the global market.

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Conal Henry, Chief Executive Officer, e|net

Henry's newest business plans call for more than doubling revenue in the next three years by deepening relationships with customers, selling more services to each, and helping them re-market and increase sales revenues.

The government has extended the broadband program and e|net is on the verge of being appointed as manager of the additional networks. Henry comments, "Some areas will be profitable and some not, but Ireland will have world-class telecommunications infrastructure and e|net will continue its growth and profits."

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Conal Henry, Chief Executive
Officer, e|net

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