

A GOOD IDEA

SOLUTION PROVIDER FINDS GREAT OPPORTUNITY IN THE GROWING DEMAND FOR IN-BUILDING CELLULAR SERVICE

by TABITHA VENASSE

For many companies, the philosophy is often ‘what can we do to get ahead of others in the market?’ Idea Networks, based out of Ontario, has a philosophy based not on helping itself, but on helping others to succeed in their respective markets.

“Our true success is attributed to the philosophy of helping other people to succeed, other corporations to succeed in their respective areas, to achieve the most that they can,” said Leonard Dea, president and CEO of Idea Networks.

Idea Networks, started by Dea just over 11 years ago, was designed to be a different kind of company than most. Dea said that before he built Idea Networks, he felt there was something not right about the way companies did business.

“When I got started, I was stuck in a company where I was just a number, nothing else, and I swore there was a better way to do things,” Dea said.

“I knew there was a better way to run a company, a much fairer way and a more human way. That’s our philosophy here; everybody lives by it or they don’t work here.”

He explained that the philosophy translates out to the company’s clients, with a mission statement that says Idea Networks ensures the success of people and companies using its services.

“We don’t do what’s best for us,” he said.

“If I can save a customer \$15,000 on a job, I’ll do it, even if it means I take it out of my pocket so that I can leave it in his pocket.”

Idea Networks specializes in infrastructure solutions and network cabling, and has recently expanded into in-building cellular enhancement and security as well.

Nominator Darin Gibbons, vice president of sales and marketing at Crossover Distribution, explained that Idea Networks made the expansion after realizing the opportunity available in the in-building cellular enhancement space. He added that after making the investment in key people and training, Idea Networks is now Crossover’s largest partner in that space in the GTA.

“Within the in-building cellular space, they have become extremely knowledgeable in a short time frame and they bring this expertise to enterprise customers on a daily basis all across the GTA,” Gibbons said. “They are key facilitators in solving problems for customers who often don’t realize that there is a technology out there that addresses their on-going cellular coverage issues.”

Dea said one of the biggest milestones the company aimed at was getting past the \$2 million revenue mark.

“We got stuck there for three years,” he said.

“Once we realized that the infrastructure itself had to be built to support \$3-4 million, it came fairly easy after that. We run with that same philosophy now; if we’re bringing in \$4 million in revenue, the infrastructure is built to support \$6 million.”

Not only does doing that allow for expected growth, it also allows for the company to build up a rainy-day fund, so that should the time come when personnel are needed to be placed to meet a certain corporate objective, it would not impact the level of customer service Idea Networks provides.

It’s not just his own company that Dea takes pride in, however. As a partner of Crossover Distribution, Dea has nothing but great things to say about the company.

“If anyone deserves any award it’s Crossover,” he said.

“They run on the same philosophy we do, and I fully expect them to take the world by storm. They’re absolutely amazing.”

He added one of the strongest points of Crossover’s business is that if a partner comes in not knowing something about a certain technology, Crossover trains them, does distribution sales, and does everything else necessary to help its partner out.

“That’s why they’re growing in leaps and bounds, they’re amazing and have a philosophy that will take them wherever they want to go.”

The praise seemed to be reciprocated from Crossover, as Gibbons explained why Idea Networks is such a great partner and deserving of the VARHonours nomination.

“Idea Networks has shown a tremendous commitment to diversify their business and have been very successful in doing so,” said Gibbons. “We collaborate regularly on sales opportunities right from the pre-sales point through to post-sales. Our relationship is built on a mutual desire to grow both our businesses and to service our joint customers and vendor partners to the fullest.”

Looking at the future, Dea said the plan for Idea Networks is to work towards the \$10 million revenue mark over the next five years, and expand its core services while continually looking for opportunities for possible revenue streams.

“We’re always looking for niches in the market,” he said.

“We want to expand to \$10 million, but again, making sure to not compromise our customer service.”

Dea said one thing that makes Idea Networks different from other companies is that it does not advertise in the markets in order to reel in customers, or go out seeking business.

“It’s all been word of mouth, and that’s led to \$4 million in revenue this year.”


Idea will also never put in an automated voice system in the phone lines, Dea said, because people prefer to talk to a real person than a machine.

As far as being nominated for VARHonours, Dea said the nomination came out of left field.

“I was totally taken back, shocked, surprised, happy, elated. It truly was a shock to be nominated.”

Despite the shock however, Dea said it was a huge honour to have bestowed upon Idea Networks, not just for the recognition of the company, but also for validation in what it’s been doing.

“For me it tells me that we’re doing things right, that the philosophy of true partnership with distributors and customers works and works well,” he said.

“For all the philosophies we adhere to, it’s just another validation that it’s working and that nice guys really don’t finish last.” 

Solution provider

Idea Networks

Headquarters

Brampton, ON

Nominated by

Crossover Distribution

Nominated for

Expanding expertise into in-building cellular arena