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Mature and fully converged

Few IT and telecoms businesses can have a stronger claim to be truly converged or be more optimistic about the future than PSU Technology Group. Directors Michael Lounton and Roy McKnight explain why.

Michael Lounton looks out of his second-floor office reflecting on the recent move to bigger, more prominent premises on their business park beside Cheltenham's busy Tewkesbury Road. PSU Technology Group, it seems, never stands still, and while others anguish about the economy and its effect on telecoms, he and his 45-strong team contemplate a future of exciting opportunities.

As Lounton explains, PSU's optimism stems from careful planning, wise decisions and grasping opportunities as they're presented: "Though our roots are in a 1980s computer maintenance business, we've successfully developed the Group with a carefully chosen portfolio of telecoms, IT and web businesses. Now, with everyone in telecoms talking Convergence and 'unified solutions', and many traditional telcos worrying how they'll survive a future built as much on IT and the web as telephony, we're in a strong position."

For PSU, the last 18 months have seen the latest in a decade of developments that clearly position the company as the mature fullyconverged business that Lounton and his team have long envisaged.

"Our latest acquisitions are an established mobile, fixed line and internet service provider, and the January 2009 acquisition of what is now PSU Software Ltd, an accomplished web content management Software provider that we bought after several years' part-ownership. They're good: amongst other high profile projects, PSU Software has successfully delivered a 52-website project for Inchcape Volkswagen Plc with further websites planned for Inchcape Toyota during 2010. How many traditional telecoms businesses can offer that sort of in-house web capability?"

Added to its existing IT and telecoms divisions, the new businesses give PSU a fully integrated portfolio of fixed and mobile telecoms, lines & calls, IT support and web capability.

A mature, fully converged business

Lounton: "One of our biggest differentiators is that we haven't just bought into IT and the web on a whim so we can proclaim ourselves 'fully converged'. As well as the acquisitions, the last 18 months has also seen us embrace WLR3, and local loop unbundling. As a mature, fully converged business, our future will be built on this full portfolio of 'BT services' and our ability to package them seamlessly with other divisions' products and services. From socket to exchange and over the web, we've got the fully integrated solution customers need as they face the exciting opportunities of initiatives such as Unified Communications and BT's 21CN.

"Our strength, all-encompassing offer and optimism simply bear out a carefully planned evolution from computer business to fully integrated IT, software, web and telecoms company (among others, PSU is accredited by Mitel, Microsoft and Citrix) taking advantage of low cost, reliable broadband. We've built a reputation as a trusted presence, 'a safe pair of hands' in whatever we do – now we've got a timely offer for clients and future trade partners who need to embrace Convergence – and that means everyone."

Future Plans

It is his recent acquisition of the web content management software company, now PSU Software, that Lounton is getting excited about as he embarks on a channel strategy that will see his company recruit up to 50 resellers to share in his company's skill in developing high profile, highly ranked, web sites.

"We have registered 50 domain names related to the most common terms that prospective purchasers of telephone systems type in to search engines and the top 50 densely populated areas in the UK. PSU own and are using the domain www.telephonesystems.co.uk and typically www.telephone-systemsmanchester.co.uk would be the partner web address."

The strategy behind this new move has been developed by Director Roy McKnight who joined the Group in March 2009. Roy will also be leading the channel push to sign up resellers.

"Working together with Panasonic Business Systems we are set to offer not only these web site domains but also a fantastic businessgeneration solution to their reseller community. By the way, for each of the web sites we would value the design and content as being worth £10-15k."

Michael Lounton concludes, "Panasonic are very excited about the prospect of new business generation and helping their channel partners realise business growth whilst PSU Group will have the opportunity of working with the 50 resellers taking up these domains for lines and minutes and other products from our portfolio. Already, and ahead of our official launch, resellers have 'found' the web sites and contacted us. It's going to be very much a win-win situation for all parties."



Roy McKnight

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