

# Profile

STRATEGIES FOR INDUSTRY LEADERS

APRIL/MAY/JUNE 2012



**THE CHALLENGES FACING** its industry are opportunities for Digital Direction, says president Bart Zimmerman. "Telecommunications carriers are consolidating and, in doing so, are cutting back on customer service," he explains. "This means that our own customer-service expertise will become even more valued."

## Creating Lasting Connections

**A**s founder and president of telecommunications management firm Digital Direction, Bart Zimmerman frequently encounters the unexpected with his clients. "As part of an initial analysis, we'll often discover voice, data lines, and even locations that clients didn't even know they had and which they don't need or closed years ago," Zimmerman says. "Such research can mean thousands of dollars saved monthly for our customers." We spoke with Zimmerman about how he built Digital Direction into a recognized outsourced-telecommunications leader.

### BART ZIMMERMAN OF DIGITAL DIRECTION DISCUSSES ...

- ▶ MANAGING TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR CORPORATIONS
- ▶ EMPHASIZING CUSTOMER SERVICE
- ▶ STAYING ON TOP OF CRISES
- ▶ TAKING THE HIGH ROAD

BY MARK PECHENIK

#### What are the key goals of Digital Direction?

By analyzing, acquiring, and then managing corporate telecommunications services, we enable clients to better focus on growing their own businesses. Telecommunications can be a real headache. We provide a vital service by relieving firms of this necessary burden and we do it well.

#### What is your role within the company?

Much of my responsibilities deal with

maintaining the company's vision; keeping it on track in our commitment to customer service and technology. I also play a large role in staff recruitment. I surround myself with smart people, and then trust and encourage them to do the best job possible.

People are our most important factor. Eighty percent of our staff are operational specialists with vast experience working for major telecommunications carriers such as AT&T or

Verizon. They are experts in getting the most out of telecommunications services and fixing the wide array of issues for our clients.

#### Take us through a typical client-relationship process.

We begin by closely examining the present infrastructure such as the number of voice and data lines, where these lines are located, and the purpose of these lines. This enables us to learn

“Telecommunications can be a real headache. We provide a vital service by relieving firms of this necessary burden and we do it well.”

**BART ZIMMERMAN**  
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

the exact needs and potential costs for telecommunications moving forward.

We then sit down with the client and propose how they can best use their telecommunications services. We'll make suggestions such as removing lines that are not being used, plus restructuring the customer's contracts with carriers to achieve the best rates, terms, and conditions. We then manage the customer's telecom moving forward.

**What happens after securing a carrier contract?** Once a package is put into place, we dedicate resources to effectively manage the customer's environment. Often, we're involved in weekly staff meetings with the client where we review service status.

This also means that, if anything should happen, we're there to make things right as quickly as possible. Time is of the essence—if you are a bank, for instance, downed data lines usually mean that your ATM cash machines are inoperational. In response to a crisis, we immediately contact the carrier and stay on top of the situation until it is resolved.

**Speaking of being in a crisis, have you ever encountered emergencies within your own organization?**

Several years ago, we hired two staffers who, one day, abruptly left and started their own company, taking several of our clients with them. It shocked our entire organization. Employee emotions ranged from rage to despair. Some wanted to retaliate.

I had two choices: Pursue the matter and probably waste time and money in legal fees and court appearances, or move on. I chose the latter option. I gathered the staff and assured them that everything was going to be okay,



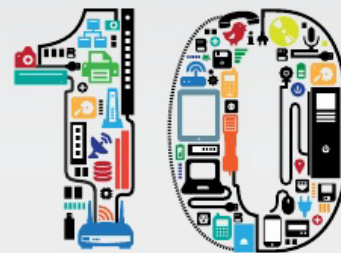
### CONTINUE MOVING FORWARD

“Our corporate strategy is [to] continue to build on our process and infrastructure to better communicate with our customers, internal coworkers, and carriers. We are currently in the middle of a systems design and integration project that will take our company to a higher level of management ability. Our investment will enable us to grow at a much more organized rate and allow for an even better customer experience than our customers are receiving today.”

that we could move on. Fortunately, we are such a strong company that this issue failed to make a dent in our operations, and that is why I decided to take the higher ground.

**Moving forward, what do you see as the industry's greatest challenges?**

The challenges facing the industry are opportunities for us. Telecommunications carriers are consolidating and, in doing so, are cutting back on customer service. This means that our own customer-service expertise will become even more valued. For this reason, I'm very optimistic about our potential for growth in the years to come. <sup>(P)</sup>



## A Celebration of Service

For the past 10 years, we have helped CIO's, IT Directors and IT departments manage telecommunications by serving as their Outsourced Telecom Management team.

Our Outsourced Telecom Management (OTM) solution enables us to acquire, provision, and support corporate telecommunications environment. OTM lifecycle capabilities include ordering and provisioning, inventory management, invoice auditing, expense management, contract and rate negotiation, and trouble ticket and billing helpdesk services.

- Inventory Management
- Contract Negotiation
- Trouble Ticket Helpdesk
- Billing Ticket Helpdesk
- Contract Management
- Procurement
- Project Manage All Orders
- Dedicated Support Team

Digital Direction is a company absolutely dedicated to helping customers reduce their telecom spend, leverage their communications environment, and create a single point of contact for experienced advice and dedicated customer advocacy.



**Digital Direction**

344 N. Ogden Ave | Chicago, IL 60607  
t: 312.633.1920 | f: 312.633.1905

[digital-direction.com](http://digital-direction.com)