

Business Profile

>OPENWAVE

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Openwave's Northern Ireland operations - helping to make it a world leader

Today it is a communications tool; tomorrow the mobile phone promises to be a command-and-control center of daily life.

When that happens, it will result - at least in part - from a call made by Silicon Valley-based Openwave Systems Inc to a Northern Ireland start-up that had made significant advances in Wireless Application Protocol (WAP).

WAP brings e-mail, on-line banking and a multitude of other value-added services to mobile phones and an estimated 525 million WAP-enabled handsets will be shipped in the United States and Western Europe by 2003.

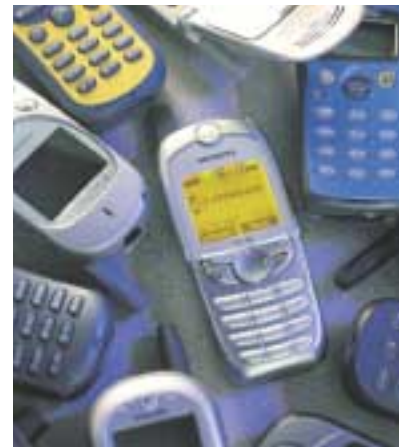
Fresh place for business

Openwave - the worldwide leader of open IP-based communication infrastructure software applications - was launched in November 2000 following the merger of US telecommunications

giants, Phone.com and Software.com. Employing 1,900 people worldwide and with offices in 15 countries, the company is a leading developer of software that enables delivery of Internet-based services to communications service providers including many of the world's leading mobile phone operators.

It established its first-ever product development center outside the United States in 1999 as part of its \$239 million acquisition of Apion, a Belfast-based telecommunications software developer and one of Northern Ireland's fastest-growing software firms.

Apion was established in 1995 to develop software for telecommunications switching projects for companies such as Ericsson - it grew to 206 employees from its initial staff of a dozen.



"In less than five years, we developed the competencies that allowed us to develop products that helped us win major contracts all over the world," says Paul Moorhead, VP Engineering, Product Development, Openwave Systems (NI) Ltd.

Responsible for the world's first commercial WAP gateway product, Apion was a natural match for the innovative Californian company.

The Silicon Valley firm had been working to market its WAP products in Europe when it quickly became apparent that a merger made much more sense than head to head competition.

Moorhead says, "It is a tribute to our people and the work we carried out in Belfast that Openwave should place its first product development center outside the US in Belfast. As part of a global player, we're very excited by the host of new opportunities that are opening up for us.

"Our Belfast operations represent Openwave's largest R&D center outside of the United States. This means that Belfast is essential to the development of Openwave's products - including a whole range of new mobile Internet technologies.

"These include key components of the GSM Association's Mobile Services (M-Services) initiative which will enable richer, more compelling revenue-generating mobile Internet services. As a result of our involvement in this major project, handsets made by companies such as Alcatel, Sagem, Samsung and Siemens now incorporate Openwave's mobile browser."

Fresh talent at work

To ensure continued access to the freshest ideas and brightest innovators, Openwave's Belfast



site has close relationships with Northern Ireland's two leading universities, Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

This enables it to recruit the region's top students all of whom have degrees in computing, science or engineering and nearly half of whom have advanced degrees.

"This part of the world is well known for producing top quality graduates in the electronics and software sectors and other related fields, Moorhead says.

"They fit extremely well with the Openwave culture. They're very process driven and very quality driven. That's very important in telecoms software."

Companies such as Openwave enjoy a broad range of business advantages in Northern Ireland such as a young and Internet-savvy workforce. The region has a world-class digital communications infrastructure, outstanding networks of services and suppliers and a government that actively encourages business investment and development.

"Given the quality and availability of people here, coupled with the fact that software salaries in Northern Ireland are - on average - 35 per cent lower than in the United States, it's not hard to see why companies such as Openwave are setting up here in record numbers" adds Moorhead.