

BUSINESS REVIEW

Western Michigan

Business Intelligence |

Tech co. builds on earlier concept

By Lynn Stevens

lynns@mbusinessreview.com

Six years ago, when Lou Hanoute founded a business on the premise of saving companies money on telephone costs, that idea was new.

Hanoute has founded another Portage-based service company with some differences: a representative network and a product provider alliance. It also has a broader geographic focus than his first venture.

He stuck around a few months to smooth the transition for the new owners of Oreon Inc.,

then launched **Novius Communications** in March 2007. Since then, he's added independent representatives in Kalamazoo, Holland and Lansing, and some 30 correspondents for back-office work.

Instead of focusing regionally, the new business takes on the national market. Novius has a Kalamazoo client with 12 offices around the country and a New Jersey client with offices in Maryland, Texas and California, he said.

Services include cutting legacy expenses and finding the best rates for voice, data, Internet, voice-over IP and wire-

less services, hosting, disaster recovery, hardware, and managed network services.

"The services are unique because I'm not working for a carrier, I'm not biased for any particular carrier and I don't have a quota," Hanoute said.

Sometimes Novius will recommend a mix of products from more than one carrier — in effect, unbundling, he said.

The company puts together what amounts to an alliance group of companies whose products don't overlap.

Novius offers telecom audits, which may reveal unused lines for which a

customer is paying, and it recommends products and product mixes that could reduce telecom spending. It doesn't have its own telecom service.

"I think the carriers do a very good job from the aspect of providing clients with a lot of information. But when you have five or six carriers all bringing information, it's information overload," Hanoute said.

"Novius cuts through promotional marketing material to what do clients really want and how much time do they want to spend on it? It's bridging the gap between clients and carriers."

Jan. 10-16, 2008 | BUSINESS REVIEW WESTERN MICHIGAN

Co. lands German account

Novius, a Portage-based telecom expense management company, won a contract for the Wixom and Bowling Green, Ohio, offices of **Durr Ecoclean**. The contract represents a move into enterprise-level companies for the year-old **Novius**.

Ecoclean is a division of Durr AG of Stuttgart. It supplies products, systems and services for vehicle manufacture, and its focus is automobiles.

Durr has offices in 21 countries, employs 6,000 and 2007 revenues totaled about 1.5 billion euros.

The Portage company

performed a wireless optimization that saved Durr Ecoclean about 20 percent without changing carriers or accounts, Novius President Lou Hanoute said.

Novius is evaluating Ecoclean's wired telecommunications systems, Hanoute said.

"In our industry, clients

are always very skeptical," he explained. "When you go in on one area and focus on proving yourself as an organization, it blossoms to bigger and better opportunities for my organization and the client."

March 27-April 2, 2008 | BUSINESS REVIEW WESTERN MICHIGAN