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The DNA for SUCCESS

As a constantly growing mobile and cable operator, DNA Ltd is diversifying its offerings and services across a range of sectors to ensure it remains at the forefront of change.

Images courtesy of DNA Ltd

“It’s interesting because we’re the challenger in the Finnish marketplace. The market is changing and it’s opening up a lot of new possibilities for companies because you have the opportunity to create new services and new value for customers.”

- Jukka Leinonen

DNA is exploring the media entertainment and IT sectors and strategically expanding its offering to address the ever-shifting demands of the consumer. As a leading pay-TV provider in both cable and terrestrial networks, Finland’s largest cable operator is setting a challenging course for the industry.

Jukka Leinonen, CEO of DNA, sat down with *The CEO Magazine* to discuss how the company has remained agile and adaptable in a fast-changing marketplace.

The CEO Magazine: What has been your professional background leading up to and including your current position?

Jukka: I started my career with a private company that operated in the area of information technology, telecommunications equipment, and military electronics. I worked there for eight years in sales and business management. After that, I joined the leading telecommunications provider in the Finnish marketplace working on large account sales and corporate data services.

I then worked in a product management and development organisation responsible for the corporate services for the Nordic area. In 2010, I joined DNA as the vice-president for the corporate business. I was running that business for four years and then I was appointed as CEO, first as the interim CEO in August and then I took the reins in November 2013.

Since taking the role, what challenges have you faced and what hurdles do you anticipate for the future?

The greatest challenge at the moment is the turbulence in the marketplace with the different industries mixing. I think you have to ask yourself what business you’re in every morning. Are you a telco operator, or are you something else? I think what we can see today is that there’s already a deep convergence between the telco-operator industry, the media industry, and the IT-services industry.

The solutions that we’re providing, both for consumers and for corporate customers, are already a mix of these industries. The whole landscape is totally mixed. You are

competing with the old telcos but you’re also competing and cooperating with different types of media houses, IT companies, and others. Finding the right place and value proposition for customers and determining your strategic positioning in this diversified landscape is one of the greatest challenges.

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With 25 years of experience in this rapidly shifting industry, what changes have you seen? How has DNA Ltd evolved to meet these shifts?

My background with DNA only stretches back four and a half years but I’ve been following DNA since the company was formed. I think in DNA the change has been really dramatic because DNA started as a mobile-only company. We were the third mobile operator in the Finnish marketplace and in its first years DNA was only ›





offering mobile voice and SMS services to customers. At that time, the market was growing quickly and that's why DNA concentrated on that area.

In 2007, DNA was buying fixed-operator businesses from lots of local telco companies in Finland. Since then, we have been heavily expanding our operations in the TV and media sector by acquiring Welho, the leading cable-TV operator in the Helsinki capital region and also the largest in Finland. We have also acquired PlusTV, which was the leading terrestrial pay-TV operator in the Finnish marketplace. Simultaneously, we introduced competition in the terrestrial

television network market by implementing our own innovative DTT network with DVB-T2 technology, and invested in Booxmedia to enable us to expand our offering to a new cloud-based TV-to-go service. With this development we have gained a leading position in the Finnish TV market.

On the corporate side, we have been expanding our portfolio by developing our own offering and processes but also entering into the value-added service layer in management services. In our case, I think the change has been very dramatic from a mobile-only company into a full-scale operator with a good offering in the TV entertainment media area for the consumers and an end-to-end ability to offer managed services for the corporate customers. It's been a rapid development and a great journey.

If you look at our history, you can really see that we've been trying to

aggressively capitalise on the possibilities we see in the shifting marketplace. When DNA started as a company, many businesses in this sector were selling access and capacity. Nowadays, it's really about the services. Customers are interested in the solutions and interesting content. In order for them to consume those services, you need to have a good network and good access. I think the key to success in that area is to be able to combine and package these together so that the ease of use and convenience in the customer experience can be as fluid as possible. That's something that we've been trying to do.

What would you say are the key values or principles that define DNA?

I think it all starts with our company values. We selected the core values of the company around seven years ago, and they are quick, genuine, and bold. I think these values are pretty well defined

and they really encapsulate how we like to operate. We are lean and mean, we have a very clear operating structure, we are very cost-effective, and we are addressing changing customer needs much faster than the traditional incumbent operators.

I think at the heart of our operations is a positive approach to the customers, which can be seen in our very high level of customer satisfaction and customer experience. I think we can honestly say that DNA customers in Finland are the most satisfied customers in our industry. Part of that is this attitude that we have throughout the company of being really easy going, flexible, and fast. I think this is something that customers really appreciate, both on the corporate side and the consumer side.

How do you ensure that staff are aligned with these values?

We heavily monitor and undertake different types of market studies

and measurements all the time, not only on our internal processes but also on how our customers view those processes. One good example for this development is that we have a process where we are continuously analysing all the customer calls that we're getting, trying to sort those calls into different categories, and trying to find the root causes and reasons for their calls.

We have long gone past the point where you have a certain kind of big development activity that changes the customer experience. We are now in the phase where every week and every month you'll find some small little piece which can be improved. This kind of continuous development process has been implemented very well in DNA.

This way we are able to, on a real-time basis, understand that our operations from the customer experience are satisfactory, and if they're not then what's the root

cause of that. I think that's the only way to ensure, in this fast-changing environment, that you are constantly able to serve the customers at the level that they expect.

Whether you are talking about sales, delivery, or customer care, we are constantly monitoring what the customer is saying. Seeking that customer feedback and turning it into activities to improve your own processes is nothing fancy—it's hard work—but you've got to be doing it every day and every week. If you establish it as a normal process in your organisation then you're better prepared to adapt to new services and demands. I think that's the way that we're trying to ensure that our operations and personnel are always up-to-date to meet the demands of the customers, and we're going to continue to do that. •

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IT visionary, Oracle, pays strong tribute to DNA's decision to underpin business with technology: "We are proud to work closely with DNA, and impressed by how they use our technology to reach their strategic goals."
- Ari Peltola, Country Leader, Oracle Finland

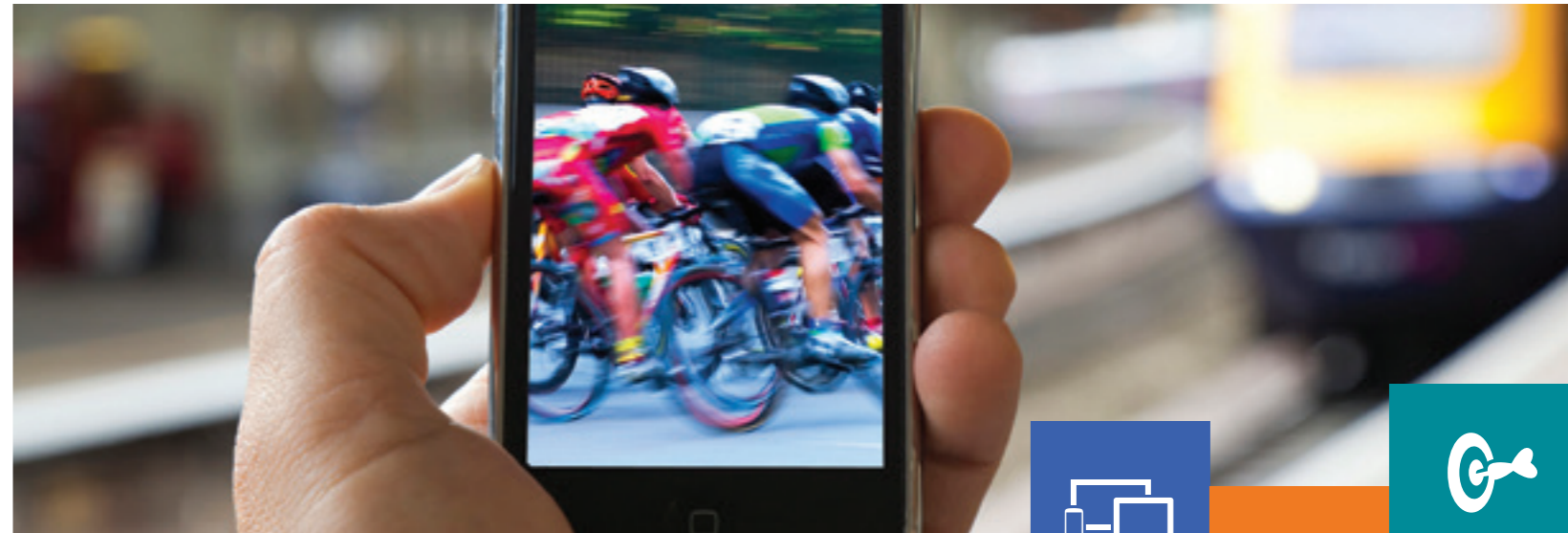
"SeaChange identifies closely with DNA's drive for continuous improvement as our Adrenalin multi-screen video platform is central to that process. We share their excitement in working together to further expand and enhance the range of services they offer their subscribers." - Andrei Noppe, Senior Vice President, SeaChange International

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