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Tucked away on a back street off busy Mt Eden Road in Auckland in a non-descript building is New Zealand's largest locally-owned software exporter.



The company's spacious and tranquil reception area belies the hive of activity undertaken behind the doors leading to other parts of the building.

Orion Health had its beginnings in 1993 with five employees in its Auckland office, then called Orion Systems. Since then, it has experienced rapid growth and has more than 330 employees supplying technology and services to more than 1,000 clients in 20 countries.

Now with offices in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia, in addition to its Mt Eden base, its turnover in the financial year to March 31 2008, exceeded NZ\$50 million. North America is the company's leading market and they are rapidly expanding in other countries.

Orion Health's success is built on the company's desire to improve healthcare outcomes for patients, with its suite of products for healthcare providers designed to integrate and exchange data.

Orion Health chief executive Ian McCrae says the company's core products – Rhapsody™ Integration Engine and the Concerto Portal™ – are fast becoming leading products in the healthcare sector. The total worldwide health IT sector is worth about US\$60 billion. The market segment Orion Health operates in has a US\$10-15 billion spend each year.

This is a big market and one Orion Health now focuses on after more disparate beginnings with accountancy packages, airport automation and travel reservation software among the products initially offered by the company.

In 1994, Orion Health became the first New Zealand company to use the internet to market its products overseas. This was the first step in what has become a strong theme for the company – Innovation is vital to ongoing success and has contributed to a steady rate of growth of between 25-45 percent each year with the goal to be a billion-dollar company by 2016.



Innovation with Rhapsody, Orion Health's core product, has led to a software package that integrates

disparate software systems to allow healthcare providers to easily share information among clinicians with a view to providing improved patient care. Concerto is a web-based single sign-on application that provides a unified view of patient information, in real time.

McCrae says New Zealand's healthcare system is highly technological which provides the ideal proving ground for Orion Health. Offshore customers can easily look at how Orion Health's products are being used and how they can be applied to their own circumstances.

"This is a good place to develop our products," says McCrae. "New Zealand is a small country, which leads to good relationships. Healthcare providers are largely automated and there is more collaboration here than we would get elsewhere."

McCrae says the Auckland base allows access to top graduates from New Zealand universities. It would be more difficult to attract top talent in California, for example, where there are many other IT companies competing for personnel.

McCrae says the need to maintain that growth means there needs to be a constant push to develop and innovate.

"As companies get bigger, that drive to innovate dries up," McCrae explains. "Companies can get caught up with the bureaucracy of just running itself... ideas get lost."

"If the innovation dries up, then you lose agility. We spend a lot of time to ensure this doesn't happen to us."

There are a number of key areas of innovation that Orion Health focuses on in order to maintain its growth. Lessons have been taken from the likes of Apple and Toyota. McCrae says short lines of communication between customers and developers are crucial. In addition, McCrae has been building a new design team and has taken the approach where the users are central to the process. The company is working to improve internal processes to ensure staff are efficient.

Orion Health also has a team working on ensuring the successes the company has are flagged as part of its marketing plan. McCrae says Rhapsody, in particular, gets good reviews and has become a world-leading integration engine.

Part of the strategy is forming partnerships. Orion Health has relationships with Oracle, Hewlett Packard, Philips, GE and IBM along with others. McCrae suggests Orion Health's partnerships are double the reach of the company.

McCrae says innovation guarantees growth. While it doesn't guarantee the future of the company, success is a lot closer to being certain.

[www.orion.co.nz](http://www.orion.co.nz)