

Orion extends reach with Microsoft deal

By Owen Hembry

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Orion Health founder Ian McCrae. Photo / Kenny Rodger

New Zealand software company Orion Health has struck a deal with Microsoft enabling it to offer a complete applications package to hospitals.

Auckland-based Orion has bought Microsoft's Hospital Information System software assets, including radiology information system and picture archiving assets.

Orion chief executive Ian McCrae said hospitals had many different applications, sometimes running into the hundreds, including patient administration, lab systems, picture archiving and pharmacy.

"The combination of [what] we've acquired from Microsoft plus our own existing Orion products gives us pretty much a complete coverage and so we are now able to provide a complete solution to hospitals," McCrae said.

"Normally North American companies buy New Zealand companies and New Zealand software assets," he said. "We're doing the opposite."

The initial focus of the acquired assets would be Asia-Pacific.

Orion also said it had signed a memorandum of understanding with Microsoft and would collaborate to provide health information exchange products to the global e-health market.

Those systems pulled together information for a patient from multiple providers and systems, including GPs and hospitals, McCrae said.

"You present to the doctor everything and so all countries in the world are putting these systems in," he said.

The collaboration with Microsoft was primarily focused on North America.

Orion's business is 90 per cent overseas and turnover in the current financial year would be more than \$100 million, McCrae said.

The deal with Microsoft probably trebled the amount of software in the organisation, he said.

"It is a massive increase in terms of the range of products we can supply ... it's a step change for the company."

Microsoft general manager of health solutions Nate McLemore said the company was committed to improving the delivery and economics of patient care in global and evolving healthcare markets.

"Through our joint efforts with e-health leaders like Orion Health, we are addressing the unique needs and challenges of regional healthcare delivery with the right combination of complementary software solutions," McLemore said.

Orion employs about 500 staff based in more than 10 locations worldwide.

The company has outgrown its Auckland head office and will move into the Southern Cross building in Khyber Pass Rd by December.

Last month, Orion said it had more than 100 new jobs on offer.

"Last year we grew by 40 per cent. So if we grow at that rate again there'll be 200 [more] people that we'll be taking on. This [latest intake] is about six months' worth if you extrapolate it out. Last year was a really good year and this year is looking good as well," McCrae said.

"As it stands today, we're by far the biggest New Zealand software company."

In May, Orion announced a 44 per cent jump in revenue in 2010-11.

Orion Health

- * Auckland-based software company.
 - * Employs about 500 staff, based in more than 10 locations around the world.
 - * Hiring 100 more staff.
 - * Revenue up 44 per cent in 2010-11 financial year.
- additional reporting Hamish Fletcher

By Owen Hembry | Email Owen