

Supporting global growth for Donegal's Errigal Seafood

One of Ireland's most successful food companies has always set its sights abroad. Errigal Seafood, based in the remote Donegal Gaeltacht, is powering its next stage of growth thanks to world-class communications services from AirSpeed Telecom.

For more than 50 years Errigal Seafood has exported Irish shellfish around the world, fresh from the North Atlantic. With more than €35 million turnover, the company continues to grow, having recently acquired a complementary shellfish business in Wexford. Errigal's entire customer base is located abroad and it's expanding fast in Asia, where turnover has doubled in the past year. With the growing need to do business electronically with agents and clients, the limited communications infrastructure in its region was posing a significant challenge.

"We're in one of the most distant locations in Europe in Southwest Donegal, where broadband speeds really are at the low end of the spectrum," explains Finance Director Alan Mitchell. ***"Our offices in Europe and Asia need inward access to our IT systems, and bandwidth restrictions meant they were experiencing a slow or unreliable connection when inputting orders. We had to find a solution."***

The company went looking for a supplier that could replace its 2 Mbps internet line with a 50 Mbps connection for both voice and data, and after examining its options, it chose AirSpeed Telecom as its communications partner.

Innovative approach brings world-class bandwidth to remote Donegal

Thanks to the rapid rollout and quick turnaround times from AirSpeed, Errigal Seafood went live within four months of agreement, despite the challenging local terrain.

Innovative troubleshooting during the rollout meant AirSpeed was able to bounce the licensed wireless radio signal securely among relay points, with no loss in performance for Errigal headquarters.

The AirSpeed solution now delivers unprecedented 50 Mbps speeds for the Carrick-based company: an improvement that was instantly appreciated both by Carrick staff and by its European and Asian sales offices dialling in via VPN. Since the rollout in early 2014, the positive knock-on effects on Errigal's business have been numerous:

- Shared services for newly acquired business: the new AirSpeed network facilitates the smooth merger with Errigal's newly acquired business in Kilmore Quay, supporting the rollout of centralised, shared services such as billing.
- SIP supports voice calls to branch offices: the solution also incorporates a SIP trunk; this has allowed Errigal's IT team to roll out a PBX solution that enables free voice over IP calls among all offices of the company, including its international sites.
- Fast, reliable inward access: staff working from international offices or senior managers needing to dial in from home report a huge improvement in the speed and stability of the system, allowing visibly improved productivity.
- Looking to the future with innovative electronic services: building on its new bandwidth, Errigal is evaluating new electronic services it could offer for its larger customers, including EDI and the potential to place orders direct via a secure e-commerce portal.

Fast rollout and tangible financial savings

Alan points to the financial as well as productivity benefits of moving away from outdated infrastructure to the 50 Mbps service, supporting both voice and data. When needed, he says he can now work as effectively from home as from his desk in the office, thanks to the improved stability and response of the VPN when dialling in. And, when on-site, he's seen a tremendous improvement in speed, responsiveness and reliability when accessing vital systems like internet banking.

"Improved productivity is the biggest benefit we've seen," Alan said. **"It is hard to quantify the financial benefit of that, but we know that we will yield far greater return from having this high bandwidth compared to our previous system."** He notes that Errigal is also expecting considerable savings on telephone line rental expense, as it begins to use AirSpeed infrastructure rather than traditional phone lines for calls. **"The rollout with AirSpeed was very easy - you'd hardly realise they were here, they were that effective- and the switchover to the 50 Mbps circuit was pain-free,"** he adds. **"I would definitely recommend them for any company who's looking for a solution to the kind of bandwidth issues we encountered."**

Keeping pace with the market and customers' technology expectations

Aodh O'Domhaill, Errigal's Managing Director, says it's vital for Errigal to keep pace with its customers' needs, and the way it uses communications technology is a big part of that.

"We must stay in touch with the market, especially as we do business with a lot of large multiples who want to use electronic services," Aodh said. **"Installing this bandwidth has opened so many opportunities to us, including giving us the proper infrastructure that will let us realise the benefit of our merger."**

For other companies who may be based in remote locations, Aodh says there's no reason to get by with substandard bandwidth when the opportunities are there to install infrastructure that can make such a difference to a company's growth prospects

"It's both an actual and a psychological barrier when a company does not have access to bandwidth," Aodh said. **"If you're a small business occupied with day-to-day operations, you may not be looking at what's out there, but there are providers who have a solution to overcome your bandwidth issues. We might be based in Carrick in Donegal, but we are an international business with significant trade overseas. Solid communications are a prerequisite for everything we want to do with our business."**

AirSpeed & Errigal Seafood at a glance:

- Donegal seafood processor with 100% exported process faced severe communications difficulties with old 2 Mbps internet connection
- Growth (by acquisition and entering new markets) demanded radical improvement in bandwidth
- Airspeed selected to provide new 50Mbps internet leased line
- Innovative licensed wireless solution overcame geographic challenges and now delivers unprecedented speed to the remote Donegal location
- Solution includes SIP trunk, facilitating voice over IP via Errigal's new Asterix PBX
- Voice infrastructure eliminates cost of multiple phone lines
- Marked improvement in speed, reliability and stability for remote sales offices and home workers dialling into Errigal VPN
- AirSpeed services are the foundation stone facilitating a range of initiatives including shared services, free inter-site calling among offices, cloud services, and new potential e-commerce services for large customers