

# Smart mover is back in the game



After raising €90m, Smart Telecom is back in business and has plans to offer triple-play TV, broadband and voice services. **Pío Murtagh** is chief operating officer.

**WITH Smart's demise last autumn, how will the new management team inspire confidence amongst Irish consumers and businesses?** We'll have to be honest about what happened in the past. There are lessons there for ComReg and the Government. Unfortunately it was the consumer that got the poor deal.

We have learnt a lot and as we go forward, customers are going to be at the forefront. We'll do everything we'll say we'll do and meet people's expectations.

**How does the new management team compare with the objectives of the previous team? What will you do differently?**

The previous team was no doubt entrepreneurially-driven and very aggressive. But it possibly underestimated the difficulties and challenges it faced from a regulatory and broadband perspective.

It couldn't have foreseen the difficulties it encountered and given the aggressive business plan it was following it was in a difficult situation.

We are not focusing on an aggressive residential expansion. The market has changed, the incumbent is now facilitating migration and this will greatly increase competition in the marketplace.

**How do you sum up your strategy?**

Our strategy is to focus on a steady acquisition of customers and make sure the products are correct and we can provide quality customer care.

**What assets does Smart have at its disposal?**

We have 37 exchanges unbundled with three new ones going live in Sligo, Cabra and Blanchardstown.

We also have the T50 network in Dublin, access to the metropolitan area networks and a large installed corporate customer base. We still have 15,000 residential broadband customers and 1,200 digital TV customers.

For our corporate offerings we weren't dependent on a third party to deliver services. As a result we were able to remain in the corporate space and keep growing and that will be the key going forward.

**'We still see ourselves as pioneers'**

**What new products and services can we expect?**

At the end of the year we will introduce new IPTV services and content in a triple-play bundle. The products will be very competitive in price and functionality.

We recently launched a 10Mbps download and 10Mbps upload Ethernet service for corporates and a 2Mbps symmetrical product for SMEs.

We still see ourselves as pioneers. Smart was very good at bringing competition to the marketplace and that's something we will continue to do. The overall message is, we're back!

JOHN KENNEDY