

Thinextra backs Sigfox platform post-sale, plans IPO within six months

IoT network operator Thinextra believes UnaBiz –the new Singaporean owners of its principal technology supplier Sigfox, dubbed OG –will help secure the ecosystem's commercial and licensing infrastructure globally. The operator also said it remains on course to IPO in the next six months, depending on market conditions.

“It's still our desire to [IPO] and we're continuing to prepare for that,” Thinextra CEO Nicholas Lambrou (right) told CommsDay. Thinextra has deployed, owns and operates its own national OG networks in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Macau.

After acquiring the Sigfox technology in April, UnaBiz co-founder and co-CEO Henri Bong said it will continue to support and work closely with all Sigfox OG Operators, like Thinextra, to accelerate their market strategies. “We believe that an open and collaborative ecosystem is key to enabling massive IoT,” he said.

“The benefit of this particular ecosystem is that we're one of 75 operators in the marketplace, all collaborating and developing solutions that can be deployed in various regions,” said Lambrou.

“[UnaBiz] understands the tech really well, including making the sensors, but they also have an appreciation for the operator perspective on what customers want and how,” added Thinextra COO and co-founder Sam Sharief.



Lambrou said Thinextra will be building its salesforce in the coming months while also keeping a “channel-first” approach. “We want to work with partners at the end of the day,” he said. “But because of the expertise that's been developed over the last seven years, we've really been able to help organisations pull their various components of an IoT solution together.”

He added this in turn means Thinextra can offer a wider consultative approach rather than simply providing connectivity. “A priority for us is really accelerating that adoption of massive IoT by bringing to the market more productised solutions rather than bespoke solutions,” he said.

Telcos are definitely targeted partners according to Lambrou. He said Thinextra was already working with Optus for example to deliver a solution to CouriersPlease. “We built a hybrid solution without any network rebuilds [being required] because our network already covers 84% of the population in Australia,” he said.

ASSET TRACKING: Massive IoT targets large numbers of devices over a large area sending kilobytes of information and not necessarily in real-time. Asset tracking is well suited to this and Sharief said the typical sweet spot for this is assets around \$1000 but economic cases can be made, in some circumstances, for assets valued as low as \$100. “Removing any manual work through intelligence, capturing meaningful data and turning that into near real time efficiencies helps you reduce your capex as a result of knowing where things are so you don't have to buy more assets,” he said.

Lambrou cited the work Thinextra has done with brewery logistics company Konvoy which manages beer kegs for more than 200 brewers in Australia and New Zealand. To address the problem of lost kegs, Konvoy commissioned UnaBiz to design its Kegfox beacon, a full-fledged, purpose-fit tracking device and software system that reports the keg's location throughout its life cycle.

The beacon is programmed to record data of the kegs at specific intervals, or events with an algorithm that detects different types of movement, such as when the kegs are moved or cleaned. Data is then transmitted to the cloud via Thinextra's OG Sigfox network. The beacons can last up to seven years transmitting information on their location and temperature several times a day.

ESG APPLICATIONS: Thinextra is also working with a number of governments around the country to trial CO2 monitoring in more than 1000 classrooms. Such a solution comprises indoor air quality monitoring devices to measure CO2 levels, proven to be the best proxy for indoor virus transmission risk. “A lot of the pressure that we're seeing in many organisations now is to really look for those operational efficiencies to address ESG objectives and that's creating momentum for us,” said Lambrou.

Simon Dux