

THE TOP 10



2003-04

COMPANY	INDUSTRY	SENIOR EXECUTIVES	TURNOVER
Empired	Software / I.T.	Justin Miller and Gavin Burnett	\$3.0m
Ozgene	Biotechnology	Frank Koentgen	\$3.4m
Messages on Hold	Telecommunications	Kym Illman	\$4.8m
Commtech Wireless	I.T. / Communications	Nathan Buzza	\$6.5m
Rewards Group	Agribusiness investment	Andrew Radomiljac and Craig Anderson	\$12.1m
Benchmark Debtor Finance	Debtor finance	Peter Langham	\$183.0m
Blockadder Group	Construction	Graeme Hearn	\$9.3m
PIVoD Technologies	I.T.	Phillip Jenkins and David Price	\$4.1m
Global Dial	Telecommunications	Patrick Ng	\$5.4m

The ranking of companies is based on growth in turnover, employment and profit (EBIT) over the two financial years to 2003.

No holding Illman back

KYM Illman is one of those people for whom success breeds success.

The founder of Messages on Hold has overseen a period of dramatic growth for his business, but has no thoughts of sitting back and enjoying the spoils of the success.

Since launching the business with nothing more than a tape deck in 1988, Mr Illman and wife, Tonya, have grown the company into a \$4.8 million dollar business that employs 46 people.

And it's not going to stop there.

Messages on Hold has projected revenue earnings for this year of \$7 million. In 2005 it will hit \$10 million, and in 2006 about \$13 million.

According to Mr Illman, focusing on growth has been a key component to Messages on Hold's success.

"We're not happy sitting still and remaining stationary. If we are not moving ahead faster than anyone else, then we are going backwards," Mr Illman said.

An intimate knowledge of business practices and exceeding customer expectations is also an important part of the company's strength.

"We've worked out that the best avenue for new business comes from doing a certain number of things in a certain order. It took us 10 years to work on that, but we've got it now.

"We have an in-house telemarketing team that contacts clients and determines interest.

"We got that idea from the movie Boiler Room and we have 30 of them working nine hours a week.

"If they get expressions of interest it goes through to the sales and within minutes the client gets a demo with their name and an audio of what we can do.

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No stopping Illman



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"It's about being quick, because people have a lot on their plate and they want it now, not in two days. We can do up an audio in about an hour and some are done in five minutes."

Mr Illman (above) said Messages on Hold had grown by understanding customer needs and providing service above and beyond expectations.

Messages on Hold is in the enviable position of competing in the market on its level of service, not on price.

"We do a lot of things before we even get them as a client," Mr Illman said. We provide everything clients want and a lot of stuff they didn't realise they wanted, but that they need."

Messages on Hold launched into the Singapore market late in 2002.

It has now established an office in the region and derives 10 per cent of its total earnings from Singapore.

Sydney and Melbourne remain key target markets for Mr Illman.

Each city represents about a 30 per cent slice of the business's income but it's an area that can grow, Mr Illman says.

There also are plans to open a staff training facility that could generate a second income for the business.

Currently writing a book on customer service, Mr Illman believes there is a need for training people on customer service and how to best deliver it.

"Opening that may lead to a new arm of the business," Mr Illman said.

Julie-Anne Spingie