

Specialists in the relatively new and highly profitable managed telecoms field, The Huge Group, was voted the third best newcomer to AIX last year.

The listing was, in August and the company, formerly called TelePassport, is the country's oldest provider of least cost routing services.

It routes corporate calls across a number of networks, including Telkom's, according to quality and cost considerations to save them money on national, international and cellular calls.

It also provides corporate reverse charge services whereby staff can try in touch with the office via their cell phones, and the office automatically pays for the calls.

Huge listed through an IPO, instead of the previously announced reverse listing into Cennag, an investment company involved in the manufacture of electro-magnets and the sale of electrical equipment.

Asked why the change in strategy, Anton Potgieter, founder and Chief Executive Officer, said: "The reverse listing process was proving to be too time consuming and problematic. Unfortunately, we had been running the on-board process in parallel with the reverse-listing process and the strategy was always speed to market,

Master plan has routing provider climbing the ranks



Anton Potgieter

rather than ease of introduction."

So what does Huge do that is different to other South African IT companies and to quote a JSE trader, "Do we need another telecom company in our already over traded and crowded market?"

Speaking to Potgieter and financial director James Herbst one immediately senses their frustration at the trader's lack of understanding of their master plan. Firstly, it has long been Potgieter's

intention to list the company and shareholders were appraised of this when TelePassport announced the reverse listing in 2007.

Secondly, Herbst stresses that Huge is not a telecom company. Simply put, the company uses existing telecom companies - which include Telkom, a host of other providers and the cellular companies Vodacom, Cell C and MTN - to manage the telecommunications costs of their clients through efficient, methodical routing and Huge's proprietary management systems.

"We are not in competition with the telecom companies anywhere in the world," stresses Potgieter, adding "their growth is inextricably linked to our success."

To answer the JSE trader more directly, Herbst states: "The telecoms market in this country is over-traded, but least cost routing and proper managed

telecommunications isn't. And, yes, we needed to list to implement our growth plans - both acquisitive and organic."

If judged on such policies, the road to Huge's listing has been, by any industry standards, phenomenal.

really successful, quickly growing from ambitious beginnings as the first local provider of international call-back to South Africa in 1993, to its current status as a top provider of complete value added, managed telecommunications solutions.

The rapid expansion of Huge started last year when plans were launched for the listing, which in turn allowed Huge to also pursue acquisitions.

As a consequence of the listing, Huge has fully completed two acquisitions, namely CentraCell and Eyeballs Mobile and are in the final stages of acquiring iTalk Cellular, which has already received full Competition Commission approval.

The original TelePassport and CentraCell ICR business was merged to form Huge Telecom, the leader in managed telecommunications in Southern Africa. The two companies were the perfect fit for consolidation, having complementary skills.



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