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FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES



KATHLEEN LAVINE | BUSINESS JOURNAL

Richard Lewis is president and CEO of RTL Networks Inc. The IT networking company ranked No. 1 in Flight III for the 2010 Fastest Growing Private Companies awards.

## RTL Networks founder planned strategically for the future

BY CADDIE NATH / DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

Richard Lewis never thought of RTL Networks Inc. as a small business.

The founder and CEO always saw a large future for his information technology solutions enterprise company.

"From the moment RTL was started [in 2002], I've always considered each process and each activity [in terms of whether it] will work once we have 100 clients, [whether it] will work when we have 50 to 100 employees or more," he said. "We've always planned as if we were big business. I just don't know how to think as a small business."

That, he said, enabled RTL's growth into the larger corporation he always thought it could be.

"It allows the company to be in a position to capitalize on opportunities when they come, especially the large opportunities as they arise, because we're prepared," Lewis said.

RTL has its headquarters in Denver and another office in Washington, D.C.

The company sells and services IT infrastructure software, including data storage, wireless networks and telephones, to large corporate and government clients. The company also installs the hardware for its IT systems.

"We don't sell the computers, but if you follow the cord long enough, you'll end up in a closet somewhere with a lot of equipment and blinking lights," Lewis said. It's that equipment that RTL provides and manages for its clients.

The company's focus on technology sets it apart from its competition, Lewis said. RTL serves as its own first line of feedback, using its products in-house before selling them to clients.

"[It] makes us very efficient and alleviates our need to hire employees for menial tasks," Lewis said. "When the economy tightens down, as we're seeing right now, we're not caught with a lot of overhead that we're not able to afford."

Despite the recession, business has been good for RTL. It increased revenue from \$4.2 million in 2007 to more than \$15 million in 2009, and employs 51 people nationally. Work done for federal agencies, including the Department of Defense, account for 90 percent of RTL's revenue.

Lewis is a graduate of the Air Force Academy, where he earned a degree in computer science. He served in the Air Force as an IT communications officer for 10 years, and worked in IT with large corporations — including Avaya, Qwest and Cisco Systems — before starting



FLIGHT III — NO. 1

**RTL Networks Inc.**

**Top exec:** Richard Lewis, CEO

**Location:** Denver  
**Industry:** IT network infrastructure

**Website:** www.rtl-networks.com

**Phone:** 303-757-3100

**No. of employees:** 51

**Revenue growth:**  
From \$4,219,572 to \$15,346,471, 263.6 %

"I personally believe we've just **scratched the surface** of what our organization is capable of."

**Richard Lewis**  
CEO, RTL Networks Inc.

RTL Networks. He got accustomed to how big companies did things, and brings the same mindset to his company.

But Lewis also has incorporated principles from his military background into his business model.

"In the military it's not about the clock; everything is mission-based," Lewis said. "In many ways that's how we look at RTL now. In RTL, we do what we need to do to ensure that the missions where we are engaged we are successful, and our clients kind of like that," said Lewis, who's also a single, full-time parent to his son, Tyler, 12.

Though the company's revenue has grown by almost 264 percent in the last two years, Lewis said he and RTL Networks are just getting started.

"I personally believe we've just scratched the surface of what our organization is capable of," he said. He sees opportunities for growth both from his government clients and in the private sector, where RTL has little business but plans to seek more in the next couple of years.

The IT industry is also growing at an unprecedented rate, Lewis said. Now, he said, his strategy is to pair his big-business practices with a small-business mindset that allows the business to be flexible and provide customized products for its clients.