

# Case Study: X-on

## Reviewing the strategy for growth

X-on is a cloud telecommunications provider. The company was launched to focus on the benefits that outsourcing communications services can offer businesses. Services include fixed voice, mobile, contact centres, data and messaging.

X-on won an Innovate UK Growth Voucher and selected Milner for strategic advice to help grow its business.

Milner ran a one-day strategy workshop for X-on at Adastral Park, BT's global R&D headquarters. The pre-workshop process included interviews and analysis. The content of discussions, decisions and syndicate work during the workshop was refined and summarised into a corporate strategy document for X-on as a final deliverable.

## About X-on

X-on supplies the infrastructure backbone behind many of the service providers supporting corporate activity within Financial and Payment service, Health, Wholesale, Logistics and several other sectors.

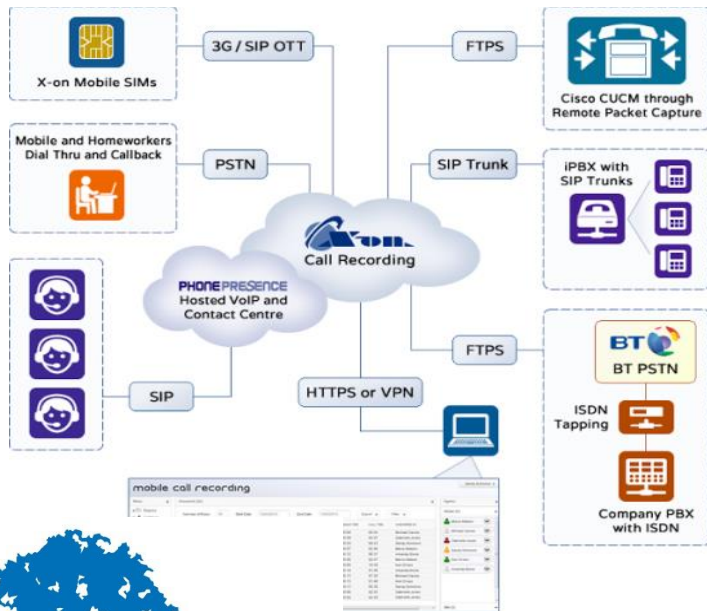
With headquarters in Framlingham in the UK, X-on has been delivering clients cost savings through Cloud based telephony services across the globe since 2000. Resilience is at the core of X-on's services with its network utilising a "three site shared-nothing architecture", switching several million SMS and call minutes each month.

## X-on's requirement

X-on's main objective was to grow the value of the company. It wanted to increase its revenue by £1m over the next 3 years, increase its employee numbers and grow revenue per employee. Milner was engaged to help review and formulate the strategy to deliver these objectives.

As part of the strategy workshop, X-on wanted to review its product portfolio to focus on core products. The objective was to simplify the complexity of its offer, enabling it to be better understood by both employees and customers.

X-on wanted a location where it could concentrate on the strategy work away from the normal office environment. Milner provided both the location and the facilitation to help X-on reformulate its strategy.



## Milner's Solution

### Pre-workshop preparation

Milner carried out pre-workshop individual interviews with 6 members of the leadership team, to review the consistency in the understanding of the existing strategy. The interviews were based on 9 questions which examined of the market, geographies, customers, competitors, products, points of differentiation and partners. The results of the interviews were analysed and anonymised by Milner and fed into the workshop slides to create areas for team discussion.

Milner analysed the Google SEO and AdWords ranking of X-on's target keywords to inform its digital marketing strategy and its messaging in the market.

Individual attendees were assigned topics on which to prepare slides and Milner collated these to form a coherent pack for the workshop. X-on's preferred way of sharing and reviewing information, Google Slides, was used throughout.

### The strategy workshop

The workshop consisted of a mixture of presentations and syndicate exercises. For the exercises, the group was divided into 2 syndicates that completed the exercises in separate rooms. The benefit of dividing the team was that each group could have an independent discussion and draw its own conclusions. This approach showed one core need was to review and refine customer segmentation.

### Post-workshop and follow-up

After the workshop, Milner wrote a strategy document based on the discussions and decisions from the day. This included a summary of the key action points to work on to further refine the strategy going forwards.

Milner kept in contact with the MD at X-on on an ongoing basis to monitor how the strategy was being used in practice and to provide a sounding board and offer advice.



## X-on's Benefits

### 1. Alignment of the leadership team

Before the strategy workshop, the pre-workshop interviews showed that members of the leadership team had a slightly different view of priority areas. As a result of the strategy review, each member of the team came away with a common understanding of the high-level strategy to implement in their own functional areas.

### 2. Comprehensive approach

By undertaking a formal review, all areas of X-on's strategy were considered in depth and discussed by the whole team. Milner's structured approach ensured that all key elements of the strategy were covered.

Although Milner has extensive telecoms sector experience, by asking independent questions without X-on's specific company context, the team were encouraged to think anew about the direction of the business.

### 3. Saved management time

By outsourcing the strategy documentation to Milner, X-on saved management time on reviewing, evaluating and writing up the strategy. The document was finalised by Milner shortly after the workshop, which meant the X-on team could use it for its discussions on direction quickly.

### 4. Clear proposition in the market

X-on's strategy document reviewed and refined how the company would compete in the market. This was an important input into a planned review of the content in its many digital channels.

### 5. Focused product portfolio

During the workshop, Milner helped X-on focus on the key products in its portfolio by reviewing the percentage of revenue that came from each product and sector. This information helped X-on to refine the product roadmap for investment and plan where future revenues would come from. This part of the strategy provided important direction for other plans (such as sales, marketing, HR) across the rest of the company.

*"The management team had a feedback session on the Strategy Day and resulting document. We all agreed that we were long overdue for a high level review of the company's direction and the exercise gave us the necessary structure and discipline to achieve this. The day was well organised and conducted in a professional manner."*

*"Following the workshop, our short-term focus was on customer segments and our product offerings. Looking back over the last year since that strategy review, the focus is more on making our market positioning clearer to prospective clients."*

Paul Bensley

Co-Founder and Managing Director

X-on