

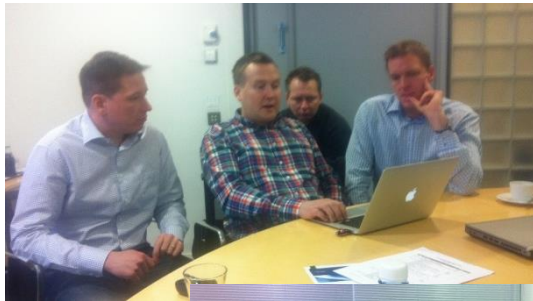
## Case Study: Accanto Systems

### Strategy Workshop

Accanto Systems (Accanto) had grown organically, adding new products to its portfolio, selling to new customer segments and into new regions and wanted to review its company strategy.

Milner designed and delivered a customised one-day workshop that covered Accanto's market, product portfolio, target customers, positioning, partner strategy and sales targets. The workshop provided the structure and time to help Accanto to review all areas of its strategy and agree on its strategic direction.

As a result, Accanto was able to formulate a clear plan of action in the market and a comprehensive shared understanding of the company strategy.



### About Accanto

**Accanto Systems** offers Customer Centric SON for NFV, enabling business-optimized virtual networks. Accanto's solution is designed to operate, predict and automate current and future networks. The platform proactively reduces customer churn and automates operational tasks that optimize the network.

The core iCEM product delivers significant revenue and cost benefits to its Service Provider customers including:

- **Up to 4 times quicker**, a typical Big Data project can take 18-24 months. An Accanto Big Data project takes on average 2-6 months to deliver initial business value
- **Up to an estimated 5 times cheaper** than general big data and analytics tools

Accanto is headquartered in Finland with customers worldwide.

### Accanto's Requirement

Accanto wanted to review and sharpen its strategy. After making changes to the company's product portfolio, Accanto wanted to ensure that time was being spent on the right markets/prospective customers and that the right product proposition was being emphasised. It also needed to ensure that all outbound communication (on the website and other digital material) delivered the correct, consistent and clear messaging about the company and its products/services.

Accanto required a supplier that was experienced in the telecoms industry and would understand both its market and the challenges it faced.

## Milner's Solution

### Pre-workshop research and analysis

Milner carried out a pre-workshop survey of the 9 attendees by phone, which allowed it to assess the alignment of the leadership team on views about the market, customers, competitors, products, differentiation, partners and web keywords.

As Accanto wanted to focus on its outbound messaging, Milner undertook a review of Accanto's intended keyword SEO/Adwords performance, and analysed the website to determine the most commonly used keywords and Accanto's ranking for these.

Milner designed bespoke syndicate exercises and allocated key topics to the most appropriate Accanto attendees for them to prepare slides on for the workshop.

### The workshop

The workshop provided the Accanto team with the space to focus exclusively on its strategy. By considering all areas, the team could ensure that the final strategy was consistent and coherent.

During the workshop, Accanto covered a number of topics that gave an end-to-end view of the strategy. The team was divided into 2 syndicate groups for exercises, which meant they could explore more options and give every participant a chance to contribute. Group discussions, syndicate exercises and a final presentation to the company chairman, gave Accanto the opportunity to take account of the widest views and refine them into a shared final presentation.

### Post-workshop support

Milner wrote up the full draft of the strategy document, saving Accanto time, then followed up after the workshop to discuss any issues arising. Accanto valued Milner's ongoing support and advice, and in April 2014, Nick Milner was appointed as a Non-Executive Director on the Board.



## Accanto's Benefits

### 1. Company-wide alignment

The pre-workshop survey revealed areas where each member of the senior team had slightly different understandings of the market opportunity. The strategy workshop and exercises made these differences clear. It allowed the team to discuss and agree each part of the strategy and ensured a shared and consistent view.

### 2. Actionable strategy

During the workshop, Accanto documented the overall revenue objective and analysed how best to meet the objective with its mix of products and customer segments. As a result of the workshop, Accanto developed a strategy with a detailed and quantified revenue plan for each part of the portfolio to put into action.

### 3. Time and space to focus on strategy

It can be difficult to create the right conditions to escape the day to day focus on running the business and check that the strategic direction of the business is correct. By holding the workshop away from the office for a full day, the Accanto team created the time and space to review all the key strategic components (the market, customer needs, the product roadmap, competitor positioning) and refresh their strategy.

### 4. Confidence from external

Internal discussions can be subject to groupthink, where participants adhere to a consensus view. Milner's facilitation of the workshop meant Accanto could be confident its final strategy had been externally tested and questioned as it was being developed and written.

### 5. Trusted telecoms expertise

Nick Milner has over 30 years of experience in the telecoms industry with executive positions at BT, Firstmark and Azure, and consulting at HTC, Arqiva and Ofcom. His expertise meant that he could ask key questions during the workshop to ensure that the Accanto leadership addressed all the main issues as they developed the strategy.

*"Milner ran a strategy workshop for us to help us develop the right product strategy to meet evolving customer and market needs. Milner's expertise across the whole marketing process, from understanding the market to implementing marketing programmes, helped us make consistent decisions across all areas of our strategy."*

*"We were impressed by Nick's depth of knowledge of the telecoms industry. After the workshop, we wanted to continue benefiting from his expertise and invited him to join the Board as a Non-Executive Director. I am confident his contribution will support Accanto's future success"*

Jarkko Multanen

CEO

Accanto Systems