

## Managed Workforce Services for the Telecommunications Industry



**Timothy B. Harwood**  
President & CEO

**CEOCFO:** *Mr. Harwood, would you tell us the focus for Decisive Communications today?*

**Mr. Harwood:** We are focusing on the broadband and telecommunications industry. We do everything from design and engineering to the actual installation and final users' acceptance.

**Mr. Sander:** I would include also that the focus is in growing our base and offering additional services to the customers that we already support in the telecommunications arena.

**CEOCFO:** *What does the company understand on a very basic level about providing services?*

**Mr. Harwood:** Most companies are just out there to get the work done and they are worried about how much work they can get and what their profit margin will be. What is different about our company is that we look to offer solutions beyond just completing the work at hand it's part of being a holistic, solutions based business partner. Our first priority is about the quality of our work, not about the quantity. Our solutions-based environment develops apps, databases and processes that solve the problems cable companies and/or the phone companies have been struggling with for years. We are technologically smart and provide a variety of solutions that help them reduce intervals and make their customers happier, with both the quality of the service and delivery time.

**CEOCFO:** *Would you give us an example of where you have made a difference?*

**Mr. Harwood:** One of services we provide is underground cable drop installation, or the ferrying, of underground cables to commercial and residential homes. As part of this work Decisive performs the repair and re-installation of damaged underground cable to existing customers homes.



**Richard W. Sander, Jr.**  
Executive Vice President  
& CFO

Typically, a damaged underground cable is discovered because a customer is having a problem related to their telecommunications services. Once the root cause is discovered a series of internal and external handoffs and actions need to be performed to allow Decisive to ultimately replace the damaged drop and restore the customers service. This process was wrought with failed transitions, inadequate customer communications and lengthy response times and disgruntled customers.

While our responsibility was limited to simply re-installation of the damaged drop, Decisive took on the challenge of improving this process for the telecom provider...our partner. We created a mobile application for hand-held devices that allows the telecom companies to completely manage all of the required notifications, internal and external handoffs and customer communications within 5 minutes, all with the touch of a screen through our mobile app. This app has improved communication with customers and eliminated much of the noise and conflict around this process. As importantly, it has reduced installation times by half.

This is a meaningful example of making a difference by using technology to better what is otherwise a very outdated process. The result is a more enhanced customer experience, as well as reduced cost to the company and headache to the customer. It is an example of us collaborating with our client to solve a problem that frankly they never

asked us to solve when they asked us to perform the work. As we said earlier, we not only performed the work, but also looked at the process and said we think we can do better.

**CEOCFO: *You work with companies like Comcast as well as retailers and government. What is the lay of the land presently?***

**Mr. Sander:** Currently, the lay of the land is we are probably 90% in the cable television/broadband industry. We not only work for Comcast, but we also work for Time Warner Cable, Cox and Metrocast. We have recently started moving toward the GSA schedule and government contracting, in the same spaces. Since we have offices up and down the east coast, we have a wide range of areas in which we can work. We like the mix and we recently started working more for telephone companies like Lumos, T-Mobile and some work for AT&T. We would like to have more of a 30% to 40% mix in the future, and we are making strides towards that goal.

**CEOCFO: *Why is this the time to diversify?***

**Mr. Sander:** I believe in doing everything that you can out of where you are presently. If you can organically grow in the offices and the areas in which you are already working, then you need to do that. In some of the areas that we work in, we are the only contractor doing the cable work, so there is not a lot more expansion there. The fact that we have built a very large operation, we can start servicing these government agencies a great deal more. We have the talent and the manpower. For a long-term strategy, you always want to diversify your portfolio. Our growth has been basically in the cable television industry, but our future is in the other spaces, while still growing in the cable industry.

“Tim has been in control for almost four of those years and what he has brought to the table, as far as growth, has been tremendous. During this period, we were able to stabilize the balance sheet and continue to grow. Growing is expensive and I always remind Tim that there is a cost to all this expansion, new marketplaces and new services offered. To accomplish this and keep the company strong with the people we employ is something Tim has put together in a short time period.” - Richard W. Sander, Jr

**CEOCFO: *You serve eighteen states on the east coast. How do you handle some of the challenges when you have a workforce that is deployed in a variety of locations?***

**Mr. Sander:** It has been a learning experience. It is the people around you and the choice of staff, executive staff and upper management. You get that correct core group of people to make sure that they are pushing the policies. Once they are pushing the policies down, understand the vision of the company and see the future, it makes it easier to distill all the information throughout the entire team. Another big part of what we do is develop inspection apps internally for our people to use so that we can actually gather the information in real-time, which helps us tremendously to understand where the problems are and the key focus to put it toward. Through this system of upward reporting, through our technology, it makes it much easier to understand what areas need which focus and our team is able to direct its attention to what is needed to deliver the company's future goals.

**CEOCFO: *Community is important for Decisive. Where do you focus your efforts and why is it important?***

**Mr. Harwood:** We place a lot of focus on children. We support local schools, music and sports programs. We also help support a program for kids who may have been through the court system. The main focus in that is that the children are our future and they need to understand that it is not just the people in their house that are supporting them, but also their whole community. Someone may see a Decisive banner at their school and five or six years later, might be looking at that Decisive banner on a truck. They may remember we were supportive and since we have such a wide reach of jobs and career paths, may want to get a job with us. It makes it a strategic focus, along with the fact that there are many children with needs. Our employees live and work in the very markets that we serve. We have employees in each of our locations. We are not just parachuting in resources to perform work, and leaving. We stage a presence in these communities and stay for the long haul. We know that it is a great show of commitment to our employees when we embrace a community and its causes. Other companies may have more of a mercenary approach to the work in the markets in which they operate, but we do it differently

**Mr. Sander:** Another example would be here in Frederick, Maryland, where we held a gift drive during the holiday season for needy children and families in the community. The focus was to give them a holiday season worth remembering. It was a tremendous success collecting gifts from our employees, which were then donated to local homes and families in need.

**CEOCFO: *Was the concept of local employees from day one or did you realize over time that the best way was to do that as opposed to parachute in?***

**Mr. Harwood:** I would say with our goals, it is more of the quality and not the quantity. The quality people jump in there and stay.

**Mr. Sander:** We have taken the approach that it's best to carefully vet the opportunity with an eye towards staying for the long haul. That allows us to recruit employees from the area, create an infrastructure for further employee growth and development and drive long term profitability

**CEOFO: *What is the key of staying ahead of the new technology?***

**Mr. Harwood:** We believe that there is never a time to stop educating. You have to know what to manage, especially in our industry. If you get behind in technology, you are left so far behind -- somebody will come in and take your work.

Unless you are very astute to everything that is going on, you cannot keep up or stay there long-term. This industry is so fast moving and technology is moving even faster. Every year there is something new that comes out to better us at our job. We always look to be more efficient and provide the best customer experience possible.

**Mr. Sander:** We have continued to recruit the best in the business to join Decisive, which I think is a testament to Tim's vision. We may not have all the knowledge today, but we will educate and acquire that knowledge by bringing in the best people in the industry to work with us. As we have grown, we have been able to attract the best talent.

**CEOFO: *What has surprised you as Decisive has grown and evolved?***

**Mr. Sander:** Maintaining the growth and the financial stability of the company has been something remarkable. The company is in its eleventh year. Tim has been in control for almost four of those years and what he has brought to the table, as far as growth, has been tremendous. During this period, we were able to stabilize the balance sheet and continue to grow. Growing is expensive and I always remind Tim that there is a cost to all this expansion, new marketplaces and new services offered. To accomplish this and keep the company strong with the people we employ is something Tim has put together in a short time period.

**CEOFO: *Why is Decisive Communications an outstanding company?***

**Mr. Harwood:** We are a company made up of subject matter experts who have by and large walked in the shoes of the customers that we are dealing with, which makes us a little unique in that regard.

We take a strong partnership approach to the business that allows us to understand the customers who we work with. That level of partnership is what makes Decisive different from most other companies that appear to look like us.

We are different because we are taking a holistic approach to solving a problem, as opposed to just the task at hand. Our customers have embraced that philosophy. The reason we are expanding with other businesses in new markets is because we have earned a reputation for excellence. We have also found that this reputation has allowed us to stay in the same market and expand our portfolio of customers. That is what makes Decisive unique.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOFO Magazine

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**Decisive Communications, Inc.**

**For more information visit:**

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