

# Network Liquidators gets ahead with the Web

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**OLDSMAR** - For many companies, how and where their listing shows up on a search engine is an afterthought. When Barry Shevlin was putting together Network Liquidators, however, maximizing his company's exposure through Web sites like Google or Yahoo! was an imperative that he says leads directly to success.



Whatever Network Liquidators is doing, it's working. The telephone network refurbishment and distribution company collected more than \$17.5 million in revenue in 2006, more than 76 percent over what it did in 2005 and 163 percent more than it earned in 2004 - making it one of the Tampa Bay area's top five fastest growing private companies.

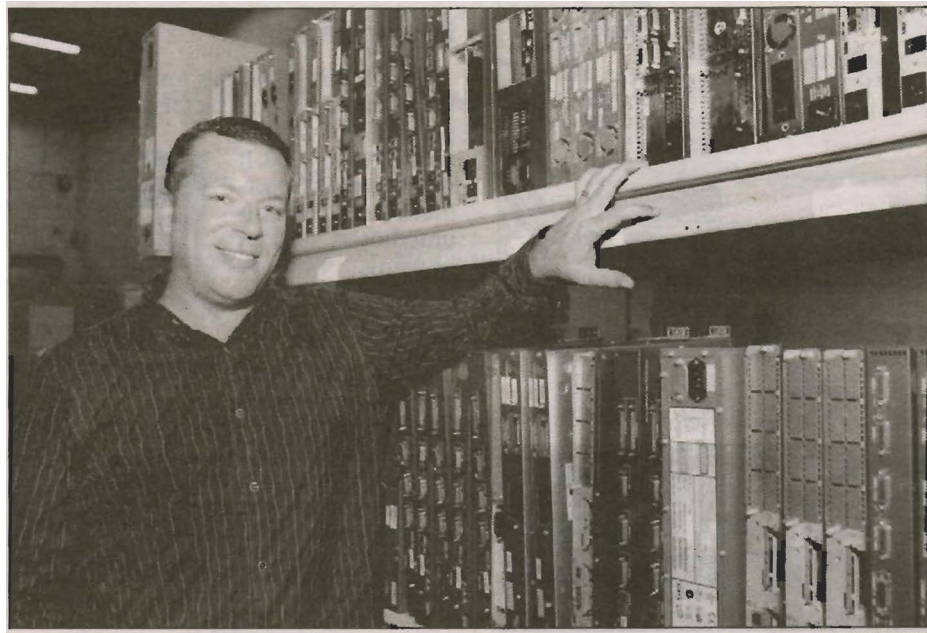
## MOVING TO THE RIGHT SIZE

"When I started the business in 2002, the first thing I noticed was that there really wasn't anyone with a clear, head-and-shoulders-above-anyone-else Web site out there," Shevlin said. "No one seemed to be worrying about search engine optimization, but I built our entire company Web site (networkliquidators.com) around it."

Because of that, when business executives do Web searches for telephone equipment distribution companies or even specific product numbers, Network Liquidators typically comes up as the first or second choice in the search results.

Finding its niche and marketing directly to the people looking for its services has grown Network Liquidators to 80 employees, and an additional 10 positions are expected to be added by the end of the year.

The company already has had to move three times in its short life, starting with a 1,000-square-foot office, and stepping up to about 5,000 square feet before finding



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Network Liquidators CEO Barry Shevlin made Internet marketing part of his original business plan.

a 40,000-square-foot facility in Oldsmar's commercial and industrial district.

Despite its success, however, Network Liquidators is still a young company, and its products for businesses with more than 100 employees typically are based on refurbished equipment, and that can be a tough sell sometimes.

"Customers have to take a bit of a leap of faith to buy from the secondary market," Shevlin said. "We might end up selling them something smaller in the beginning, but when they see that the quality is as good as new and we make good on our promised delivery times, we start to see larger opportunities with those customers. A big part of our growth is from expanding within our existing customer base."

## DIVERSIFYING AND ACQUIRING

The business telephone distribution business is a highly volatile one, fluctuating more wildly than even the current economic climate that it depends on, said Bill Lambert, who owns the 25-year-old Tampa Bay Communications Supply Inc. Companies usually buy phone systems when they absolutely need it or have discretionary funds available, which may be a benefit of the long shelf life of different phone systems but tough for companies that supply them.

So to keep afloat during the slower

times, it's important for phone supply companies to diversify their services as much as possible.

"We have to be a multifaceted company to make up the differences, and we do that by finding out where else we're needed," Lambert said. "One of those areas has been as a repair house, and we end up getting a chance to service a lot of the equipment we sell."

Tampa Bay Communications, which employs more than a dozen people, also works with different partners, including a Sarasota-based voice over IP company called Star2Star Communications.

Network Liquidators took a similar route, except it outright acquired INation Technology last December to help expand its product line. The company also picked up \$12.8 million in venture capital funding from PNC Business Credit and Jefferson Capital Partners.

However, the next breakthrough of success for Network Liquidators may not be financial but simply local.

"A lot of people in this area don't know we exist, and we really haven't done a good job of marketing in the Tampa Bay area," Shevlin said. "We never had a real local presence here, and that is something we definitely want to fix."

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