Zen’s Partner Event signals the start of a new era of growth

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Zen used its annual Partner Event this week to kick-start a new era in the company’s evolution, unveiling its first Chairman, ambitious growth targets and a renewed commitment to a ‘people first’ approach.

Chairman Paul Stobart was officially introduced to the audience at what he described as an “incredibly exciting time” for both Zen and its channel partners. Paul brings huge experience to the role, having been part of the executive team that took turnover at business software company Sage from £120 million to £1.3 billion between 1996 and 2011.

Paul told the event:“With the convergence of voice and data, the emergence of cloud-based services and a multitude of other propositions coming onto the market, the opportunities for channel partners and Zen have never been better.”

Welcoming Paul to Zen, CEO Richard Tang explained his decision to reconfigure Zen’s management structure, bringing in a board of directors for the first time.

Richard said: “Zen has a huge opportunity over the next few years and if we are to maximise that opportunity and really scale Zen up to be a major contender in the UK market, we need a leadership structure that is even stronger and the ability to tap into even more experience and capability.

“Our current senior management team have done a brilliant job. The separate board, chaired by Paul, will work closely with the SMT to unlock new and exciting opportunities for growth.”

Unlocking those opportunities was a recurring theme of the event, staged at Manchester’s historic Museum of Science and Industry. Among technological marvels of the industrial revolution, speakers talked of the accelerating pace of change, the convergence of data and telephony, and the coming revolution in internet speeds spearheaded by ‘ultrafast’ broadband and 5G.

Stephen Warburton, Zen’s managing director for channel, reiterated Zen’s commitment to ultrafast FTTP and G.fast technology and highlighted a series of technical innovations – including significant advances in the company’s partner portal and learning zone – that make Zen easier to do business with. The event reinforced Zen’s transition from a simple ISP to a company that can provide Ethernet, IPVPN, voice and cloud services, on top of next-generation connectivity.

Stephen added that businesses were looking for suppliers they could trust to cut through the jargon and provide them with the right solutions for their needs. He told the audience:

“Zen is all about people and all about service, so please make use of our expertise. We can help you grow your businesses.”

Richard also emphasised that, for all Zen’s technological innovation, its people-first approach would continue to fuel growth. His keynote speech focused on Zen’s independence and the long-term philosophy

it helped to foster. That long-term approach led to better business decisions, for both Zen and its partners, in contrast to the sometimes catastrophic shot-termism of companies beholden to shareholders and share price.

It was left to partner Kevin James, managing director of Kevin James Ltd, to sum up what Zen's people-first approach meant in practice. "We've had 12 years with Zen and they just deliver. Nothing is too much trouble. Nothing is too much of a challenge," he said.

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Editor's Notes

Zen Internet is a telecommunications and internet service provider (ISP), providing a full range of data, voice, hosting and infrastructure services to homes and businesses across the UK.

Zen provides its customers with the capabilities they need to communicate, collaborate and thrive in a highly-connected world, all supported by a highly robust and resilient independent network.

The company delivers excellent customer service and technical support. Zen has won many awards for excellent services including PC Pro's Best Internet Service Provider, the UK IT Industry Award for Services Company of the Year, a UK Customer Experience Silver Award for Technology & Telecoms, and was recently named a Which? Recommended Provider for Broadband Services.

Zen also provides business-grade broadband, Ethernet and data services for a wide range of large business and corporate customers.

Zen Internet employs more than 430 staff and last year generated revenues of £63.7m.

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