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URL: <http://www.systemscontractor.com/article/5062.aspx>

Redmond, WA -- Business music and AV systems provider PlayNetwork completed a merger with Seattle-based Crows Nest Entertainment (CNE), a digital signage and systems integration company, on June 30.

Lon Troxel, whose role has transformed from that of PlayNetwork executive chairman to CEO, explained why the two Seattle area companies decided to merge their operations on a local and national level through their national networks of contractors. "The goal of this merger is to aggressively diversify PlayNetwork as a media entertainment company both in the music and the video side of the retail marketplace," he said. "PlayNetwork was looking to enter the digital signage business, and we plan to combine our branding expertise with the best practices coming from Crows Nest. We expect to be a significant player as an integrator in the digital signage marketplace for the specialty retail and retail marketplaces."

With Troxel serving as CEO, PlayNetwork founder Adam Brotman will now devote his efforts to developing a PlayNetwork spin-off expected to launch in the consumer music market in early 2006. Former CNE president Jim Wessels has assumed the role of executive vice president of operations for PlayNetwork. Walt Tatum, a commercial entertainment industry veteran, has also joined the company as executive vice president.

The three major components of CNE's business will be integrated into Playnetwork's operations, including a Trusonic music and messaging account base, CNE's electronic systems business with clients such as Federated department stores and airport systems provider Host, and also the digital signage business and its lead customer, CompUSA. CNE recently completed the rollout of a new advertiser-driven model of high-definition satellite digital signage for CompUSA. "They're one of the really early adopters of high-definition digital signage," Troxel noted. "This advertising model and the work that PlayNetwork has done with Hollister stores where a digital satellite network delivers real-time video for branding gives us a unique position. We'll be able to provide a full-service relationship with the customer, whether it's through an advertising or branded digital signage model."

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