

On to Bigger and Better Things

As UpStream Network becomes part of Single Digits, the company becomes part of a large, well-capitalized organization that will be better able to serve current and future clients.

By Bryan J. Rader / *UpStream Network*

We have all seen hard work. We meet people every day we admire and who have worked extremely hard to develop something, build something or complete something. I'm sure you would agree.

When I scroll through my LinkedIn account each morning, I frequently read stories about companies or executives who have climbed a tall mountain and achieved a great outcome or result. It may be an award, or a new position, or a new key account.

Or something even bigger.

A LONG ROAD

My colleagues and I recently sold UpStream Network, which we formed in early 2017, to Single Digits. Today, I sit in admiration of the team members who made this great accomplishment happen.

When we set out to form UpStream, we were dealing with a TV-centric company that had outdated technology, limited broadband services, and client relationship challenges. The company was not winning new business and was seeing competitors take away its most prized clients.

Over a multiyear period, the company's associates were able to launch the UpStream Network platform, rebuild the company's reputation with customers, change the company culture, and focus on delivering top-quality internet and digital TV services to clients.

This took a lot of hard work from the entire organization in all areas of its business – from field operations, to engineering, to construction and account management. It took refocusing on how to win, how to compete, and how to grow a new business.

I'm sure many UpStream team members would say these past four years were the hardest in their working careers and, possibly, the most rewarding. Creating something from virtually nothing is a special experience. I couldn't be prouder of our team and this achievement. Today, I see this story playing out in many other places in the broadband industry.

NEW GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Recently, several other independent broadband providers have successfully taken on new investors or combined their businesses with other, often larger, providers. This is the sign of a healthy, growing and attractive industry.

I've been involved in our market for an awfully long time, and I can't remember another period with so much investor interest and activity in the broadband space. Although others may be in the early stages of their businesses, it's always a good sign when there is this much activity occurring in the broadband industry.

Now, this does not mean the market should begin to attract companies with short-term mindsets that seek to build and sell quickly. This is not appealing to real estate clients, who have a much longer-term time horizon for their communities.

In fact, this is not how UpStream viewed the plan. We had an investor group that had already been in this space for many years. By joining with a larger, well-capitalized organization, we can better serve our current and future clients.

What impresses me most is the energy in our market today. Dozens of hard-working entrepreneurs and operators are hustling day and night to bring high-quality services to their clients. They're growing and winning and continuing the tradition of successful independent providers owning an important spot in the market.

This is what I admire about the broadband business today. It's led by driven executives who bring diverse solutions to customers with unique business plans. It's my hope that each company will continue to look at the industry's history for guidance and advice on how to be most successful in this endeavor.

Best wishes for a successful and healthy 2021! ❖

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