



Three-year growth: **1,115%**

TECHLINK ENTERTAINMENT, Sydney, N.S.
President/CEO: John Xidos

What's your previous job experience?

I've been in the gaming industry since the early '80s. The entertainment sector has always been front and centre for me. At age 11, I borrowed all of my sister's stuffed toys and set up a circus in my backyard. I raised \$12 that day.

And the most surprising fact on your CV?

If anything, it's the ability to attract talented people to a vision. Success is measured by the people you surround yourself with.

What do you look for in an employee?

Motivation and tenacity. With those two qualities, you can't go wrong. I've only ever checked a potential employee's references in order to confirm past employment. Why would someone use a reference who would have nothing good to say about them?

How would you like to improve yourself?

Listen more to others' opinions. It will help make my decision-making much more effective.

How would you like to improve the company?

Going from a development company for 10 years to commercialization has been, and continues to be, challenging. Our goal is making sure the people on our bus are sitting in the right seats with the proper tires, making for a smooth ride. This is done by creating the right culture in the company. We hope to create a better company by making sure the personalities match. It's really no different than a marriage—there has to be common interest.

How did the company start?

With an idea. I was in Newfoundland on a business trip. The first evening in the hotel I was watching a pay-per-view movie, and suddenly the light bulb went on: Wouldn't it be a great idea to bring gaming into hotel rooms for tourists, businesspeople, and conventioners staying one or two nights? The rest is history. Techlink has done a complete 360 since then. Our main product lines are responsible gaming and video lottery terminals.



“Gaming has now reached the point that you won't be able to do it without a seatbelt”

What has been the biggest growth factor?

The Need for Responsible Gaming technology. Last year \$1.5 trillion was bet globally. As the revenue increases, so do the social costs and legal liabilities to both government and operators. Like a car, gaming has now reached the point that you won't be able to do it without a seatbelt or restraining device.

What has been the biggest obstacle?

Access to capital. Most people want to be within 45 minutes of their money.

What's the next big move for the company?

Last year Techlink generated approximately \$450,000 in sales. This year it was just short of \$10 million. Our projections are \$24 million for next year. That's the next big step.

How do you achieve work/life balance?

It's a struggle. I spend 80% of my time working. My goal is to decrease that number by 5% per year for the next six years.

How do you encourage your employees to do the same?

Most of Techlink's employees have a much better balance in their lives than I do. For those who have some of my tendencies, I encourage them to focus on the 5% rule. It's like managing your diet or trying to quit smoking cold turkey—it rarely works. But the 5% model has potential. It's actually working for me.

If you weren't doing this now, what would you like to be doing?

A true CEO is a visionary. I love to invent. My virtual folder has over 100 inventions that I would love to execute. Who knows, one of those could turn out to be another Techlink.

What's your next big personal move?

Achieving a better balance between work and life.

And your guilty pleasure?

Eating junk food at night watching TV. — G.G.