



**For More Information Contact:**  
Monica Baer, 262-522-9687  
[mbaer@baercarlson.com](mailto:mbaer@baercarlson.com)

**For Immediate Release**

## **CC&N's New President Institutes Changes to Post Profit** *Company Recognized as ESOP of the Year*

**Pewaukee** – For Lisa Reardon, her first year as president of CC&N presented a number of challenges – how to remain profitable in a down economy, how to effectively run an employee-owned company and how to communicate CC&N's expertise when the company often operates behind the scenes.

To address company profitability, Reardon's first order of business was to implement a number of far-reaching changes. In 2009, CC&N – Wisconsin's largest provider of cabling and connectivity solutions with more than 600 clients – had \$25 million in sales, down approximately 23% from the previous year. However, despite the decline, the company was able to post a 3% increase in profits over 2009 expectations. And business projections for 2010 are strong.

"We used 2009 to improve our internal operations," says Reardon. "Although a company never hopes for a slowdown, it benefited us overall because we were able to focus inward and launch a number of new companywide initiatives that have improved profitability."

Another challenge for Reardon was guiding an employee-owned company.

"Since the employees are also owners, we share much more information with them than traditional businesses do," says Reardon. "Establishing the appropriate communication channels to convey business changes or key information and secure employee feedback is vital in an ESOP." (ESOP stands for Employee Stock Ownership Plan.)

As a testament to CC&N's employee communication and participation model, in early March, the company was named ESOP Company of the Year by the Wisconsin Chapter of The

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N27 W23588 Paul Road • Pewaukee, WI 53072

(262) 523-0299 • (800) 944-1715 • Fax (262) 523-0393

ESOP Association. As state winner, CC&N is going on to compete at the national level for ESOP Company of the Year.

According to the Wisconsin Chapter, CC&N was selected based on its communication with employees; commitment to employee participation, wealth creation and individual dignity and worth; and its financial stability.

Another challenge for Reardon and all CC&N employees is managing the company's mix of clients.

"We have a variety of channels through which we secure business. We can work directly with a client. Or, a client may hire an architectural firm who hires us. Or, a general contractor may hire an electrical contractor who, in turn, hires us."

Additionally, in many instances, CC&N is a behind-the-scenes company, which makes educating potential and current clients about the company's offerings a challenge. The company's employees often work in ceilings and walls, in data closets and basements, and even below ground to lay cable or install wireless technology that supports everything from phone systems and data servers that run customers' IT systems to high-tech medical equipment, such as MRI, CT, telemetry and life-critical devices.

In fact, CC&N works with the area's leading health care systems that include ProHealth Care, the Medical College of Wisconsin, Moreland Medical Center and Advanced Healthcare Systems. Its clients range from a large Fortune 500 motorcycle manufacturer to industry-leading businesses like Schneider National to smaller enterprises and groups such as the Painters & Allied Trades District Council No. 7, Milwaukee County Children's Court and the Sheet Metal Workers Union.

### ***New President Discovers Strengths & Implements Changes***

As the company's president, Reardon thought her strengths were her 20-plus years of finance, sales and operations experience in the industry. However, she quickly discovered she excelled in strategic planning.

"When I took over as president, I immediately assembled the company's vice presidents and conducted a whiteboarding session with them to identify the vision of the company and map out what we needed to do to reach that vision."

Based on that initial session and subsequent planning meetings, Reardon and the management team implemented far-reaching changes within the company.

First, Reardon and her management team developed four business priorities that now guide all decision-making within CC&N – Service Excellence, Employee Owners, Financial Safety and Growth.

“Throughout the organization, we’re bringing these priorities into the culture of CC&N,” says Reardon. “Any management decision, co-worker collaboration or client project should support or positively impact our service excellence, our employee owners, our bottom line or the company’s growth.”

Second, she identified the need to eliminate waste, improve efficiencies and build the company’s processes and infrastructure.

“Although CC&N ran just fine and was successful, some processes were lacking, and in many areas there was no uniformity. For example, employees were each using their own systems to sell, track and manage projects,” explains Reardon.

To improve efficiencies and reduce waste, Reardon implemented a Lean Office approach, which applies principles from Lean Manufacturing to office operations. To improve the company’s processes, CC&N began using a customer relationship management program.

“My goal was to change the company’s focus from just getting the job done to selling, managing and completing the project with an eye toward future relationships,” says Reardon. “Instead of being an operations-driven organization, I wanted us to be sales-driven with superior operations delivery.”

To bring about that change, Reardon introduced Microsoft Dynamics, a customer relationship management program that tracks customers, projects, new business leads and marketing opportunities throughout the company.

Third, Reardon worked with her new sales department to clarify the company’s offerings.

In July 2008, CC&N established a formal sales department and brought in an experienced director of sales and marketing. The department now has four sales people and two marketing professionals.

“When I took over as president, we had a confusing mix of offerings,” says Reardon. “Since then, we’ve identified and formalized our eight centers of expertise and created sales and marketing materials to better explain those to our clients.”

CC&N’s eight centers of expertise include Connectivity Solutions, Wireless Solutions, Access Control & Security Solutions, Voice Communication Solutions (featuring Avaya), ARNOC™ Data Network Solutions (including HP and Microsoft), Network Monitoring Suite, Mobile Device Management Solutions, and Managed Staffing Solutions.

“Solidifying our products and services contributed greatly to our 2009 profitability,” says Reardon. “Our services represent a strategic mix of one-time capital projects or IT investment, and monthly or multiyear contracts to provide ongoing technical and monitoring support. The company now has two independent income streams.”

### ***CC&N Looks to Grow Emerging Services***

Currently, the company’s Connectivity Solutions (cabling for phone systems, computers, video systems, building access and security) is its largest revenue source. In the future, Reardon expects demand for CC&N’s Network Monitoring Suite, Managed Staffing Solutions and Mobile Device Management services to grow as companies continue to reduce their internal IT staff, outsource tech support and become increasingly dependent on wireless and mobile technology.

For example, since 2004, CC&N has provided Mobile Device Management services to Harley-Davidson. CC&N supplies 24-hour management and support for 3,600 devices, including cell phones, PDAs, pagers, Blackberries, Air Cards and Vocera badges. CC&N delivers mobile device training for new employees, trouble-shooting for existing employees and set up and support for Harley-Davidson employees who are traveling overseas.

Part of the company’s Networking Monitoring Suite services is ARNOC™, a highly developed suite of software tools and services. The globally available network monitoring solution includes a 24-hour live response center staffed by CC&N employees and managed support services for any network-attached equipment, including UPSs (Uninterrupted Power Supply device) and environmental probes.

CC&N's environmental probe solution enables customers to monitor network equipment rooms for environmental conditions that could potentially damage equipment or cause application downtime. The probes continuously check room temperature, humidity, smoke, the presence of water and other variables, presenting customers with real-time information or alerting them when dangerous thresholds are crossed.

CC&N now monitors more than 20,000 network elements with ARNOC environmental probes and UPSs deployed across four continents at companies throughout the world, including American Family Insurance, which has more than 80 probes monitoring conditions in its data closets, Tower Automotive and Synarc, the world's largest central radiology service dedicated to clinical trials, which uses ARNOC™ for network and server monitoring.

Bob Wolf, vice president of technology at CC&N who oversees the ARNOC™ service, explains how environmental conditions can impact sensitive equipment:

“Often times, clients don't think about what's in the ceiling above their equipment like pipes carrying water. If one of those pipes has a slow leak, humidity is added to the air or condensation can occur, which can be harmful to equipment. Our probes will sense those conditions and issue an alert. If an alert occurs, the client can be notified by an automated voice mail, text message, e-mail, personal phone call or other method from our ARNOC desk.”

### ***CC&N Predicts Continued Growth in 2010***

For CC&N and Reardon, 2010 is looking good. CC&N has a number of significant projects scheduled throughout the year. Unfortunately, the company is bound by confidentiality agreements and can't release the names of its multimillion-dollar clients.

Reardon is confident the changes the company put in place and its short-term strategic plans will enable it to thrive in 2010. She notes that CC&N is well-capitalized and is looking to expand through acquisition and the development of new products and services.

Those plans are all part of her whiteboard vision for CC&N.