
ThinScale's Brendan Kiely: How a newbie built a profitable tech business

In our latest ThinkBusiness Podcast, John Kennedy talks to Brendan Kiely about how, despite being a tech newbie, he built a software start-up that was profitable from day one.

IADT Dun Laoghaire-based [ThinScale Technology](#) is an international software company specialising in desktop virtualisation and server-based computing, facilitating accessible and secure remote work for businesses of all sizes.

The company came to life in 2013, when Brendan Kiely went into business with his software developer brother-in-law.

ThinScale disrupted the thin client market with ThinKiosk, the first Windows based PC to Thin Client converter. The company was an immediate success, due in part to Brendan's recognition of the enterprise potential of the software they had developed.

Necessity is the mother of all invention

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Despite being a beginner in the world of tech, Kiely guided the company to profitability from day one, experiencing annual growth of approximately 20pc.

If anything, the truth about business is the detail, not just the passion, and when he co-founded ThinScale he was able to apply the management experience he gained in various NGO and multinational roles down through the years, particular in areas like sales and general management.

“My brother-in-law was tackling a particular problem that really annoyed him and that was converting older PCs to operate as thin client computers and he wrote a bit of code to sort it out.”

The idea gained traction online and before the ThinScale Technology founders knew it they had landed one of their biggest and long-standing customers, the Dutch Government.

“I was never a big technologist, but I've always got a grasp for a new subject and was able to immerse myself in that subject in order to not be afraid of it. That's a big part of what being in

business is about, something you have to do all the time. You have to keep growing, you have to keep changing.”

The crucial aspect of ThinScale has been its ability to convert standard PCs into clean and functioning thin client devices that rely on the cloud to function perfectly.

After several years of the business growing steadily the perfect storm – Covid-19 – was also the ideal litmus test for the technology. “We support business process outsourcing (BPO) companies and contact centres in the US, for example, and one of our customers went from having three or four thousand people at home to 40,000 people at home.”

The key to the move to remote working isn’t just enabling technologies like broadband and digital devices, but absolute, security. “There’s a big story yet to come out about the security breaches that have happened during the timeframe we are in now. You can’t just take a machine out of the infrastructure of the network of the office and just think its secure.”

If anything ThinScale has seen its business grow five-fold during lockdown. “We were already established in a market with a good reputation. Seven of the top 10 BPOs in the world today rely on our software for their home working solutions. One of these – Teleperformance – has 310,000 employees.”

Kiely said the global lockdown that came in the wake of Covid-19 has led to many business owners and chief information officers reluctantly admitting that home working works, particularly from a productivity perspective.

He believes this presents Ireland with an FDI (foreign direct investment) opportunity to become a global leader in remote working. “We should set out a goal to be the most remote working/home working-friendly country in Europe.

“The longer this continues the more this change will become embedded in our work culture.”

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Written by [John Kennedy](#) (john.kennedy3@boi.com)

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