

IT firm pushes boat out with new Belfast offices as it eyes ambitious expansion

Dublin-based Codec, which has just relocated operations in Belfast, is impressed by the talent available in the city



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IT solutions provider Codec has announced it's pushing ahead with ambitious expansion plans after opening a new office in Belfast.

From a modest start with just two employees in the city in 2016, the firm's growth trajectory means it now employs more than 50 staff here.

It also enjoyed a substantial 18% revenue growth in the last year.

The company marked the success with relocation from Victoria Street to a new office in The Boat building.

Codec specialises in providing business applications, artificial intelligence and cloud infrastructure to organisations in the public and healthcare sectors.

Earlier this month it officially launched its newest UK division, headquartered in London.

The premises in Paddington will allow Codec to grow its presence in the UK market as it looks to expand its existing client base.

It follows a number of large UK contracts secured over the last 12 months.

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The “significant high scale contracts” and new office are expected to create 100 jobs over the next two years, bringing the headcount to more than 400 employees.

Codec is expecting to create a further 65 jobs in the Republic, with the backing of Enterprise Ireland.

Northern Ireland commercial lead Stephanie Conville said Codec had experienced notable growth.

She explained: “2023 has been a really significant year for Codec.

“We won the Microsoft Country Partner of the Year award in the summer, so that was a massive coup for Codec.”

It’s the fourth time Codec has scooped the award, which acknowledges successes and innovations by Microsoft partners in over 100 countries.

Ms Conville added: “We are the largest independent provider of Microsoft based solutions in the UK, so for us to win that award was major.

“It’s been a very busy year for us and everything is moving in the right direction for us and that’s all come to a head.

“Winning the Microsoft partner of the year is very much about the growth in our market.”

And she said it was aiming to increase staff numbers locally.

“We’re absolutely looking to grow that year on year because we consider it a really strong, highly skilled and talented workforce,” she added.

“There is a really high calibre of students from out of Queen’s and Ulster University.

“We do tend to recruit graduates every year into our graduate programme.

“Then they end up staying with us and progressing through the organisation.”



Codec's Belfast team recently moved into new premises in The Boat

This year Codec successfully completed transformative projects for institutions like the two local universities and Northern Ireland Water.

Ms Conville said the strategic partnerships have been key to the business.

She said: “We’re their strategic partner for their digital transformation journeys and we have long-term contracts in place with them.

“They’re very significant contracts that we’re growing year on year and which we’re able to replicate elsewhere.”

After securing significant domestic growth the company is now setting its sights on the United States market, looking to replicate those successful business partnerships.

Ms Conville said that the nature of Codec’s work means the business can continue to pursue international expansion while having a major office in Belfast.

This enables the company to meet both its expansion targets, while dealing with the skills shortage affecting the market — benefiting via the talent emerging from our two local universities.

While still at an early planning phase, an expansion overseas will be a significant step for the company, which already has offices in Malta, Germany and Turkey.

Ms Conville said: “Looking forward, it’s a really dynamic time at the minute for the IT sector.

“We are finding Microsoft launching a lot of new products, such as Microsoft Co Pilot and their AI portfolio.

“All our customers are showing interest and discussing what that means for them, especially in the public sector in terms of the benefits that it can bring for productivity, customer experience and cost savings.

“So there’s a lot of new contracts coming out, and a lot of our customers are really actively looking out for what that means for them, so there is a lot of growth and a lot of potential in that area.”

She is confident the growth in pace for artificial intelligence technology and the potential it offers will have contributed to a strong pipeline for the business.

She explained: “There is a real growth trajectory when it comes to AI.

“I think that the possibilities are endless, and we’re just starting to see the beginning of it, but the applications are huge.

“Everyone sees the benefits of it.

“But now it is a case of how do we turn it into action and what that looks like in real life. I think AI is here to stay.”

Codec is one of Ireland’s leading cloud solutions consultancy companies.

Established in 1985, the business has grown to a team of more than 300 people, with that number set to grow even more over the coming years.