

Teenager ready to take on telco giants

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Luke McIntyre is expanding his business, having just opened his OMEX offices on Wellington's Lambton Quay.

The thing about this businessman is he's just turned 16.

It was an encounter with an American businessman, who invited Luke to present a 30-second pitch for his Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) concept to hotels, that netted him \$80,000 in venture capital for product development.

Luke's business will provide a television interface service to hotels, which will make the client's stay better and improve the services around the city, he says.

He has already secured a trial with a hotel in Wellington, and on Friday he was pitching for \$500,000 — \$1 million investment for stage one.

And he's not fazed asking for that amount of money. "It's no different. Work's still work."

Luke said he already had market validation by clients, which made it easier to ask for money. He planned to expand the services to Auckland with five-star hotels his primary target.

In 2009 he started at Wanganui Collegiate as a Year 10 student where he hooked into the expertise of IT tutor Gilbert Hokianga and business tutor Mark Wilson.

Wilson said in one of the first conversations, Luke told him he wanted to "take out Telecom".

"He was frustrated with their pricing and service and knew he could do better."

Then Luke, aged 14, entered the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) and started developing key contacts.

"He told me we were going to have the first 4G network in the Southern Hemisphere here in Wanganui, 10 times faster than current providers for a fraction of the price. Partners on board included Powerco, Wanganui City Council, GDM and HooHaa, with expert advice from MOVAC.

"I remember listening to Luke talk to the top technical people in New Zealand from Ericsson who were not up to his knowledge on LTE networks, so they transferred us to the experts in Australia, who were just going to training, so they transferred us to Singapore. It was amazing to watch the way top executives were working hard to follow the genius of a 14-year-old boy.

"He has been put on the Grow Wellington programme and in typical Luke style developed computer-based applications, for a fee, for the other participants."



WORLD'S HIS OYSTER: Young director Luke McIntyre (right), 16, with general manager Mark Major at the new Omex offices on Lambton Quay.
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