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Scott Hicks casts a wide net

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Executive appointments

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# Scott spreads wide net in a wired world



**WIRED:** Adam Internet managing director Scott Hicks at his city office with operations executive Michael Owen and national solutions manager Rebecca Razzano.

Words: Tania Bawden  
 Careers Editor  
 Pictures: Mome De Klerk

Adam Internet is at the cutting edge of online technologies and has grown significantly since 1995 when Scott Hicks took the company reins.

**T**HE age of 29 may sound young to run an internet company, but Scott Hicks is starting to feel his age. Adam Internet's managing director, who runs one of South Australia's largest household internet service providers (ISPs), is surrounded by more than 90 staff, many of them under 25.

"I am starting to be one of the older ones in the company, which is a bit of a worry," he jokes, having himself taken over the company at 17.

His young staff, the majority male, run at the forefront of new technology, providing solutions for rapid broadband delivery of voice, video and internet services. One of their latest projects is delivery of SA's first fibre-to-the-home networks, at the Land Management Corporation's Lochiel Park development, north of Adelaide.

Mr Hicks says the fully-upgradable system could become a blueprint for other new housing developments, including some of up to 10,000 new residences proposed for SA in the next decade.

"This technology particularly suits the move to running a business from home, which requires reliable internet connections," Mr Hicks says.

"It can also deliver security surveillance, VoIP, movies-on-demand, and all other broadband requirements."

Mr Hicks says the Adam system is more secure than the Federal Government's plan for fibre-to-the-node solutions to deliver internet services.

With 90-100 sign-ups a day, Adam Internet's customer base has doubled every year since Mr Hicks took the reins from his father, Adam Internet founder Greg Hicks, in 1995.

Personalised service to a customer base of about 70,000 mainly residen-

tial users remains the focus of the growing SA company.

Greg Hicks, as chairman, has seen the company started as a free community bulletin board hobby develop into a fast-growing business.

Father and son always shared a strong interest in computers and technology, and Scott Hicks remembers being keen to do work experience at the family business as soon as he was old enough.

"Although I had the title of managing director, I was also the secretary, cleaner, technician and trainer," he recalls.

With ADSL2+ next-generation

**“Our culture is a big thing. It's not like working for a big corporate. We still operate like a family business”**

technology introduced over 24 exchanges in SA two years ago, Adam Internet also provides wholesale access to 12 smaller ISPs. It has recently appointed a network operations manager, Richard Siggs, to cover this side of the business.

Mr Hicks has a strong management team including national solutions manager Rebecca Razzano and operations executive Michael Owen.

Meanwhile, many of the "young guns" at Adam are so immersed in the technology, it becomes a lifestyle and culture which Adam is capturing and capitalising on as an employer.

After all, this gang of under-30s often prefer a social night out at a gaming party, rather than a dance party. This has created events, such as the Adam Internet-sponsored *Valhalla & Reloaded*. These attract more than 500 participants.

The human resources policy is

simple: "Give the right people the tools to do their job, then empower them to do the right thing," he says.

"This generation is looking for more than just monetary benefits. They want to keep at the forefront of technology.

"We give them internet access, regular social events and constant training and development opportunities."

Some customer service staff rise to be senior managers and network developers, leaving little room for the cost and time involved with external recruitment campaigns.

Every month, 30-40 jobseekers are drawn to a recruitment seminar advertised on the Federal Government's JobSearch website..

Attitude and aptitude are important but Mr Hicks says it mainly is about an individual's ability to communicate.

"About 90 per cent of the job is based around communicating with customers over the phone and assisting them on the net," he says. "Our culture is a big thing. It's not like working for a big corporate. We still operate like a family business."

With the right type of personality, he says, people can be promoted quickly. He will not reveal turnover but says 300,000 customers is not impossible in the near term, given broadband penetration is still only about 60 per cent in SA.

It's a busy year for the former Sacred Heart/Eynesbury College graduate, who almost started a law degree. He is planning to travel in Europe after getting married next month and last month completed an SA country road trip to support one of Adam Internet's charitable fundraisers, the Variety Bash.

Go to [www.adam.com.au](http://www.adam.com.au) for more information