

Belfast software company doubles headcount as pandemic trigger demand hike

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A Belfast software company has nearly doubled headcount since the start of 2021 as a result of soaring demand during the Covid-19 pandemic.

SciLeads, which develops lead generation and market intelligence platforms to help scientific instrument suppliers, said it has taken on 18 new staff in the last nine months and now counts 40 staff in total.

It said it expects to hire another 10 employees before the end of the year, with vacancies currently live for software engineers and sales and marketing graduates.

While most of its staff are home-based in Northern Ireland, SciLeads has employees in locations from Belarus to Barcelona, and chief executive Daniel Ritchie, originally from Belfast, has been based in Vancouver for the last three years.

SciLeads' marketing platform provides data on all the research grant awards made globally.

It said the information has become more valuable during the pandemic as it helps companies reach their target customers;

researchers who need high-tech scientific equipment, such as microscopes or genetic sequencers, to carry out their work.

Its software is used by eight of the top 10 global companies in the life science instrumentation field including Bio-Rad, which provides a wide range of products to scientists to support COVID-19 screening and research.

“It’s an exciting time for SciLeads as we mark five years in business and look ahead to the next stage of growing our global business, starting by doubling our workforce to 50 by this year and launching a new Salesforce app to streamline our service for clients,” Daniel Ritchie said. “We have seen additional growth as a result of the cancellation of industry events where suppliers usually network with researchers because it meant that many scientific instrumentation companies were in a crisis and had to look at marketing to prospective buyers in new ways.

“While innovation and exceptional data quality were the main drivers of Scileads’ success before COVID, the need for companies to experiment and try new digital marketing tools has further boosted sales in the last 18 months.

Since SciLeads was launched in 2016 by three friends in their twenties – Daniel McRitchie, Laura Haldane and James Campbell – its turnover has almost doubled each year and the company is aiming to achieve similar growth this year.

CEO Mr McRitchie said: “It’s an exciting time for SciLeads as we mark five years in business and look ahead to the next stage of growing our global business, starting by doubling our workforce to 50 by this year and launching a new Salesforce app to streamline our service for clients.

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He said the trend toward remote working was embedded in SciLeads from its foundation.

“As company which has always been remote first, we didn’t have to change any of our working practices when COVID hit. Unusually for the tech industry we employ more women than men and our culture has enabled us to employ people who live in different time zones or who don’t want to spend three hours of their days commuting to an office.”

“This has worked well for some parents, who may choose to split their working day to pick their children up from school, or for some of our developers who prefer to work in the evenings.”

“Although we may be widely dispersed geographically we’ve found effective ways to make sure we work as one team, from creating a virtual office where we can work collaboratively, to online speed networking events where staff get to know each other on a one to one basis, and in person team meet ups when restrictions allow.”