

# Lift doors open for creative rising star

**Claire Heaney**

THE average city worker spends 81 minutes in a lift every month.

With a trip taking around 46 seconds and people taking between six and seven trips a day, you can see how it starts to add up.

Some big office buildings have anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000 people travelling in them each day.

And the travellers are more often than not drawn from the lucrative A and B demographic, meaning they have money to burn, make lots of business decisions and are often hard to reach - without distractions.

So it's no wonder the once humble lift is one of the new frontiers in advertising.

It's not just about getting from the lobby to the office, the captive audience is now being wooed with slick screen systems bearing advertising and information.

In 1999 Oliver Roydhouse, now Inlink's managing director, saw the largely untapped potential.

Mr Roydhouse worked with Macquarie Bank in technology, having studied at Melbourne University and in the US.

The former technology analyst left Macquarie after four months.

"I quickly realised that I wanted to do something something entrepreneurial," he said.

He said the timing was bad. He started to launch Inlink amid the dot.com boom but shortly afterwards he concedes "the whole thing exploded".

"But I decided to keep going with this venture ... it was really quite difficult in the early stages," he said.

"The business model required a lot of money and trying to raise money in a very difficult environment was extremely hard when we were a technology start-up."

"We basically had to live off our own money which was nothing but we got through and eventually raised some money," he said.

Mr Roydhouse was undaunted, having displayed an entrepreneurial streak early on.

"I went to a boarding school and we weren't allowed sweets in the school and I smuggled them in and sold them at a very young age," he said.

Before going to Macquarie he had run an IT business for a number of years.

Initially, Inlink's business involved developing a national network of digital LCD screens in lifts and lift lobbies in commercial buildings.

The advertisements are screened from 7am to 7pm weekdays and usually change on a monthly basis.

Today, Inlink Media has contracts to supply more than 600 screens in more than 150 office towers.

"We expect that to double by the end of 2007," he said.

The screen includes advertising and news and weather feeds.

According to Mr Roydhouse, Inlink has a monthly audience of more than 700,000 but the expansion is expected to see it reaching 1 million people by year's end.



**Going up:** Oliver Roydhouse saw the potential of advertising in lifts and built a successful venture.

Its national network takes in buildings in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra.

Mr Roydhouse said the business has continued to innovate, developing a second branch of the operation called Inlink Technology.

The business has just unveiled the world leading Intellicam at Melbourne Central.

Intellicam provides an integrated product which combines video surveillance, safety and information.

He said the Intellicam marked a

move away from the core business. It received a Commercial Ready grant of \$500,000 through AusIndustry to assist with the development.

Next month Intellicam will be showcased at a German trade show, Interlift, which would see it snapped up worldwide. Around 18,000 people are expected to participate in the forum.

Mr Roydhouse said part of the success of the business so far was applying for and getting government grants to further the business.

In addition to the Commercial

Ready grant, Inlink received an earlier \$100,000 grant.

The Comet grant, also from AusIndustry, provided funding to develop the business model, research and develop and capital raising.

The business also has been able to take advantage of Research and Development tax concessions.

Mr Roydhouse said Inlink was careful to protect its innovations with patents and intellectual property protection.

Net link: [www.inlink.com.au](http://www.inlink.com.au)