

My Business column
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Partnering for profit with Ashington

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As South Australia's economy continues to gain strength from huge investments in resources, defence and property development, an increasing number of small to medium businesses are looking to finance their own ambitious expansion plans.

As managers of the Ashington Private Equity Fund, we specialise in providing expansion capital to small and medium businesses with investments typically in the range of \$200,000 to \$1 million.

While these smaller companies offer exciting growth potential, they are often overlooked by larger corporate investors. For Ashington, they can represent a good fit with our hands-on and committed approach to business development.

Unlike some private equity firms that are solely money managers, Ashington has a long history in running its own business and property developments. I believe that gives us a competitive edge when partnering with other companies in order to grow their sales and manage the challenges inherent when expanding any business.

My business was initially established in 1987 as a private investment group. In recent years, it has expanded and been restructured to provide strategic capital and business advisory services to growth-oriented SMEs as well as wealth creation opportunities for individuals and groups of investors.

Today, Ashington Business Solutions and Investment works with a wide range of businesses and investors in three main areas: private equity investment; property investment and development; business and property advisory services.

While property investment and business advisory services are generally well understood by the community, private equity investment can be something of a mystery to even experienced investors and business owners.

This generally refers to early stage equity financing of young and emerging companies that show high growth potential.

Ashington is carving out its own niche in this market.

A recent private equity deal for Ashington involved an enterprising business called Planet Party. The business has a retail outlet in City Cross Arcade, off Rundle Mall, carrying over

5,000 product lines. Planet Party has everything from tableware to edible gifts and assists in all aspects of party planning by offering themed selections of products.

Injecting additional funds into this business has enabled it to grow more rapidly and capitalise on opportunities otherwise unavailable.

Another successful investment for Ashington has been Lync Software, a data loss protection company based in the Adelaide CBD. Lync was started in 2000 and, in a very short time, has licensed its technology to nearly 2,000 firms around the world, including icon brands such as Boeing and Pepsi.

Supporting Lync's growth is a strong international marketing program and Ashington has provided funding to support this activity.

Building on many years of business and investment experience, Ashington aims to add real value and generate solid returns over the longer term for clients and investors.

We invest our own funds and our philosophy is simple: we succeed because of our ability to research and recognise opportunities and to operate with professional integrity, ethics and efficiency. I am always seeking to meet with interested investors and, as an investment company, we are always keen to review any project that fits within our investment framework.

The Australian private equity industry is expanding at an increasing rate, providing a range of opportunities for South Australian businesses.

However, identifying the right growth partner has never been more crucial.

Key Points:
Ashington Business Solutions and Investment

- Established in 1987
- Provides strategic capital and business advisory services to growth-oriented SMEs
- Managers of the Ashington Private Equity Fund
- Investments typically in the range of \$200,000 to \$1m.
- Strong track record in business and property development.

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