

Business

Boulder's FreeWave Technologies appoints Kim Niederman as CEO

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FreeWave Technologies, a Boulder-based manufacturer of wireless data radio products, appointed software and networking industry veteran Kim Niederman as CEO as part of an effort to fast-track the 21-year-old firm's growth.

Niederman – whose past roles include serving as an executive for 8x8 Inc., Polycom and Cisco – takes the helm of FreeWave from Steve Wulchin, a co-founder of the Boulder firm, who will serve as the company's president, officials announced Wednesday morning.

"We think this is an exciting new phase in the company's history," Wulchin said.

Under Niederman's direction, FreeWave officials hope to further capitalize on the exploding machine-to-machine, or M2M, communications market. Research firms such as Gartner and IDC have pegged the broader "Internet of Things" global market to be about \$2 trillion.

"We are very well-positioned. If you look at what we've done for 21 years, it's just that," Ashish Sharma, FreeWave's chief marketing officer, said, referencing the company's M2M track record. "...It's not just about products and solutions. It goes way beyond that."

Wulchin has overseen FreeWave's sale of more than 1 million data radios in industrial markets such as oil and gas, precision agriculture and environmental monitoring.

Wulchin declined to disclose the privately held company's annual revenue as well as the percentage of annual growth, but said FreeWave was at a stage when Niederman's guidance could be critical.

Niederman initially was recruited to serve on FreeWave's board of directors, but Wulchin said he saw some value-added potential in having Niederman take a bigger role. Niederman's experience in accelerating companies include growing 8x8 to a market capitalization of \$1 billion, a five-fold gain in a period of 2.5 years.

"I just saw that he had a lot of the skillsets that I thought could be very valuable in this role," Wulchin said.

Niederman said his vision for FreeWave includes: a continued focus on the industrial M2M market; development of an "ecosystem" of partners, such as sensor manufacturers, and the opening of APIs to third-party developers; channel expansion; a furthering of the product roadmap; and global expansion.

FreeWave has 100 employees in Boulder at its headquarters and manufacturing facility.

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