

# IDI Delivers Seamless Integration And Scalability To Fuel FirstLight's Rapid Growth

For over 20 years, FirstLight has been designing, building and maintaining fiber-based communications networks throughout the Northeast. They are committed to providing the high-quality, scalable data, internet, colocation and voice connections that enterprise and carrier customers need to thrive in today's digital world — and prepare for tomorrow's.

When FirstLight experienced a period of accelerated growth due to M&A expansion, they turned to IDI Billing Solutions to help them achieve their goals by integrating disparate systems onto one comprehensive B/OSS platform.



## ✓ The Challenge:

### Aligning Under One Roof



Expanding your business through mergers and acquisitions (M&A) is a successful growth strategy for many organizations, but it comes with its own challenges. Uniting a distinct combination of technologies and workflows under one roof, is easier said than done. That's why it's so important that communications service providers (CSPs) have the technology required to replace or integrate with legacy systems as well as the expert support needed to make everything work in harmony. CSPs that plan to continue growing through M&A especially need to ensure that every critical technology platform is future-proof and can seamlessly scale as their business demands.

FirstLight is no stranger to the nuances of M&A expansion. The organization itself is a roll-up of multiple organizations, combining each one's strengths to deliver better services to the market. Today, the organization comprises nearly 30 entities united through M&A activity.

Accelerated growth like this simply would not be sustainable without a solid technological foundation that's built to last. Among the many solutions FirstLight relies on to manage day-to-day operations, IDI Billing Solutions' CostGuard® Billing and OSS holds a central position as the organization's billing platform, providing timely and accurate billing, rating and taxation.





## ✓ The Solution:

### Billing System Consolidation With CostGuard



Many of FirstLight's acquisitions have historically used a different platform for their billing requirements. With each new acquisition, the organization essentially inherits a legacy system that needs to be either integrated or replaced. Decision-makers determined some time ago that a best-of-breed approach would help FirstLight create a sophisticated and high-performing technology stack by picking and choosing the top platform for each business operation. Embracing this mindset, the organization has adopted various systems from acquired companies and made them the preferred applications for every entity across the enterprise.

FirstLight's initial experience with CostGuard came as a result of that same process. After acquiring Sovernet in 2017, the FirstLight leadership team recognized that the organization's legacy billing system outpaced their own in terms of functionality, performance, scalability and support. Since that time, CostGuard has been FirstLight's billing platform of choice, consolidating all billing, rating and taxing processes under the CostGuard banner.

*"Operationally, CostGuard makes it so much easier for us to have a single platform that works across the organization and all of our products and services," said FirstLight Chief Information Officer Len Camara. "It streamlines the process of consolidating and integrating our acquisitions as seamlessly as possible."*

By simplifying the workstream in this fashion, FirstLight can spend less time worrying about the logistics of its technology footprint and focus more on delivering high-quality services and support to its customers. When your organization includes multiple companies and lines of business that would otherwise require teams to juggle 10 or more billing systems, that simplicity is as good as gold.

*"Because we are on such an aggressive and rapid acquisition mode, being able to integrate legacy data from very different systems makes it a lot easier to pump data into the platform in a short period of time," Camara explained.*



## ✓ The Implementation:

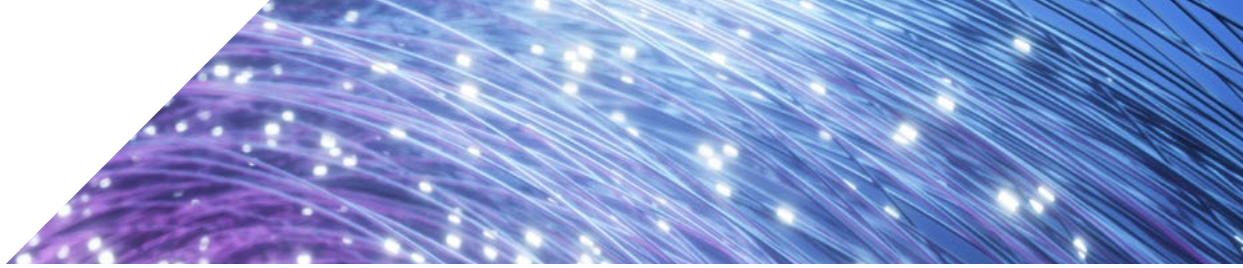
### Expanding CostGuard Capabilities To Meet Growing Requirements



Any technology solution, whether it's a billing platform or another type of application, needs to be able to grow and evolve with an organization's needs.

**Over the years, FirstLight has found new ways to leverage CostGuard's capabilities while incorporating additional features and modules to deliver a better customer experience.**

Across the board, FirstLight teams have found CostGuard to be very user-friendly, allowing them to explore new applications for the platform and get more value from it. As a result, the time to train and onboard users has been reduced significantly, helping new staff get up to speed with everything CostGuard has to offer.



## ✓ The Results:

### Developing A Successful Relationship With IDI



The CostGuard platform has provided a number of day-to-day benefits for FirstLight, but to fully appreciate the value this solution delivers, you have to look at the working relationship between the organization and IDI Billing Solutions.



With every new acquisition, FirstLight's goal is to fully integrate that company — along with its legacy systems and processes — within 150 days. When you consider the technical complexity and potential disruption that such an undertaking entails, those acquisition milestones can be difficult to hit without both a streamlined integration process and expert support to make everything go as smoothly as possible.



From the very beginning, IDI has provided that hands-on, consultative approach to help guide integration projects, answer questions and address any unexpected roadblocks that get in the way.



*"IDI knows our customer base really well, and they've been with us every step of the way as we've expanded and moved into new markets," said Customer Support Director Debbie Bunce. "They're always ready to work with our team and help us hit our timeframes."*

Communication between IDI and FirstLight occurs on an ongoing basis, rather than being limited to only major integration initiatives or one-off projects. Every two weeks, team members from both organizations meet to discuss any lingering issues that require IDI's support, and they review all outstanding cases and service requests.

Those conversations can also zero in on opportunities to expand the CostGuard platform while identifying features, tools and modules that can be updated, optimized or expanded upon. The goal is to get the most out of the partnership, and IDI is always available to lend support.

*"We certainly look at IDI as a strategic partner," said Bunce. "We feel comfortable knowing we can reach out to IDI about anything, especially as our needs change as we grow."*

CostGuard's intuitive user interface has been extremely helpful in this regard as well, giving FirstLight employees a single view of every case and service request in motion. It's easy to see what work still needs to be completed, and the IDI team is always quick to respond to any questions or concerns.





## ✓ Building For The Future With IDI And CostGuard

As FirstLight continues to expand its service offerings, team members are confident that IDI and the CostGuard platform will be able to handle any new billing requirements that arise.

If the past is any indication of the future, FirstLight will undoubtedly continue the path of growth and success, and CostGuard will be there to support new requirements, integrate recent acquisitions and provide for additional service offerings. The strong relationship forged between FirstLight

and IDI will continue to flourish as team members from both organizations collaborate on useful features and best practices that deliver more value to FirstLight and their customers.

*“Billing is a 100% kind of thing: Either it succeeds or it fails,” Camara explained. “If it fails, you don’t get your revenue and you end up with frustrated customers. CostGuard just works, and the partnership with IDI works, so it’s one less thing to worry about.”*



## ✓ Ready To Build A Better Experience? Talk To IDI Today.

Through innovative technology, people, partners, and systems, IDI is committed to providing a highly secure, world-class, cloud-based B/OSS platform that delivers the freedom and flexibility to streamline operational efficiency, monetize services, automate operations, and seamlessly scale as your business demands. To learn more, call **888.924.4110** or contact us [here](#).