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Press Clipping

Title: The Sunday Times

Month: March 2020

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Access to talent is why we based ourselves in Wales

Many consumers find it a chore to deal with banks and utility companies on the telephone or online. Bill Safran, CEO of Vizolution, explains how the software firm is helping these businesses provide a better customer experience.

I set up Vizolution with my colleague and co-founder Huw Rees in 2013. He's from Llanelli, and that was one of the drivers to set it up in Wales.

We're a customer experience company, and our aim is to streamline complex customer journeys. When clients interact with banks or telecom companies, they're often asked to go on these convoluted, fractured journeys, based on what's good for the business. We flip that on its head and put the customer at the centre of everything.

We achieve this by providing technology that replicates a face-to-face experience over a remote channel. Anything that can be done in person can now be done remotely. So, a call centre can talk

through a sales process with a customer, have them download information or upload photos of their passport or driver's licence, or sign agreements with them there and then.

Since 2013, we've grown from two people to 147. We now have 20,000 call centre agents around the world using our software, who delivered approximately two million sessions with customers in 2018. Our biggest customers are RBS, Santander and HSBC, and we've also got some big telcos such as O2. We've even had investments from RBS, Santander and HSBC, so they're now shareholders as well as customers.

We originally set up in the Technium in Neath Port Talbot, but soon outgrew that. We're now

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Tech pioneer:
Co-founder Bill Safran

at Bay Studios, on the way in to Swansea. We've taken over 12,000 square feet and turned it into a Silicon Valley-inspired hi-tech hub, complete with all the necessary accoutrements such as ping pong and foosball tables. It really creates a dynamic environment for our employees.

Being able to attract and retain talent was one of the reasons we based ourselves in Wales. In London, you may be able to hire staff immediately, but you lose staff quickly too: there are so many competing employers. In Wales it may take longer to find the right person, but the quality of the talent pool is very high. A lot of our employees have been with us for years. The business environment is attractive here, too. We've had good support through

R&D programmes from the Welsh Government, and the Development Bank of Wales has been very supportive. We've built links with Swansea University, taking on talented individuals with computer science skills. At the moment we're just employing graduates, but we'd be open to taking on undergraduates who could work part-time and get work experience.

There are plenty of other great fintech companies in Wales, but we don't have any direct competitors. We're expanding rapidly into Europe, and also into North America. We have small sales offices in Toronto, but the technology and support operations are being run out of Port Talbot – and the core of our operations will remain in Wales.