

Area X.O – Drive the Future

InDro Robotics has become a key player at Area X.O

The Story

InDro Robotics has specialized in drones and robots for seven years, having come to the business from aviation.

Philip Reece, InDro President and CEO, was so early to drones, he secured advisory roles with government and industry. When he first started working with Transport Canada, there were two people dedicated to drones. Now there are more than 40.

He says InDro Robotics is an integrator that sources the latest of its hardware components and then builds and integrates the smart parts. A tech company through and through, 24 of its 28 staff members are engineers or manned aircraft pilots, most are both.

The Obstacle

InDro's customers are often in dangerous situations. They might be paramedics heading to a remote car accident, not knowing what additional supports — such as firefighters — they'll need until they get there. Those who monitor hydro-lines by hanging from helicopters are also customers, as are those who hang from bridges in harnesses to examine their structural integrity.

Through its drones and robots, InDro reduces this kind of professional risk for its customers.



The Solution

InDro's technology becomes more powerful the further away the drone can fly, but to fly further, one needs reliable command and control links, Reece says. That's where Area X.O comes in.

"We were able to test cellular, 4G, 5G and how they interact," Reece says, noting that InDro was able to confirm the reliability of its technology.

Area X.O gave InDro the ability to experiment in a way that would have taken it thousands of hours of real-life flying otherwise. The company also undertook an Area X.O project to build a mobile command centre in a Mercedes Sprinter van.

The Update and the Future

The company opened a small office at Area X.O and then expanded, giving it a strong Ottawa presence and, thanks to the facility, it was able to recruit some top talent. He likened it to a campus environment.

InDro was recently first to fly a drone over 5G and it has some exciting projects underway, including robots that use a laser system co-developed with NASA to identify gas leaks and others that take warehouse inventory.



Testimonial



“It’s great to have a base in Ottawa because servicing New York is easier to do from Ottawa than Vancouver, where we’re headquartered. We carried out demonstrations at Area X.O and use the communications as well as technology that only that site has. We’ve also started to work with a number of companies on site. A number of us are working on complementary technology, often to solve very different problems, but seeing it through different eyes really offers some of those aha! moments.”

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