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### **IT Consulting Companies N'compass and Applied Communications Merge to Meet Growing Demand for Strategic IT Services**

MINNEAPOLIS (Feb. 14, 2011) – Two well-respected, innovative Minneapolis-based information technology (IT) companies, N'compass Inc. and Applied Communications of Minnesota, are merging to meet the increasingly complex and growing network enterprise demands of mid-size and large businesses throughout the Upper Midwest.

N'compass, led by co-founder and CEO Gerry Hansen, and Applied Communications, led by owner and president Kristi Paul, are merging their companies with the intent of leveraging their strengths of each to provide a more broad and complete range of strategic IT services. The combined company will offer IT strategies that help companies optimize their business operations by teaming with N'compass' subject matter experts and IT engineers to specify and install network hardware and software solutions.

When fully merged by May 1, 2011, the new company will go to market under the N'compass brand and will be owned by an executive group consisting of Brian Bagley, Christopher Flaherty, Gerry Hansen, Kristi Paul, Christopher Pinc, and Keith Meierhofer. The company will employ more than 40 employees and will maintain both of its current offices, offering employees the opportunity to work from the office of their choice.

The “new” N'compass will maintain its focus on large corporations with large-scale and complex data management operations, while at the same time building a presence among emerging businesses that seek strategic IT counsel. Current clients of the combined organization include Allina, Best Buy, BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota, General Mills, Lawson Software, Medtronic, and US Bank, among others.

“Today’s companies are looking at every aspect of their business operations to find ways to operate more efficiently, reduce their costs, and optimize their IT investments,” said Gerry Hansen. “By merging with Applied Communications, we can now address the needs of our clients at every level, from C-level strategy development to the installation of hardware and software that supports an organization’s goal of operating more profitably.”

“We’ve been exploring this merger for months,” Kristi Paul added. “We share similar values, similar cultures, and serve similar sized clients. More importantly, Gerry, our partners, and I, share the same burning vision for client service and helping our clients achieve measurable, bottom-line improvements in their IT infrastructures. We believe it’s a great match and it will allow us to achieve more together than if we were to continue on our separate paths.”

Under the terms of the merger, Kristi Paul will become Executive Vice President of Sales of N'compass and Gerry Hansen will continue to lead N'compass in the role of President and CEO. The other owners of N'compass will continue in their respective roles: Brian Bagley serves as CFO and Executive Vice President of Solutions; Christopher Flaherty as Executive Vice President of Strategic Accounts; Keith Meierhofer as Executive Vice President of Business Development, and Christopher Pinc as Executive Vice President of Solutions.

N'compass ([www.ncompass-inc.com](http://www.ncompass-inc.com)) was founded in 2001 by Christopher Flaherty, Gerry Hansen, Keith Meierhofer, and Christopher Pinc with the mission of transforming the way companies think about IT. By harnessing the power of strategic IT, N'compass bridges the gap and changes the conversation from traditional IT to strategic IT, linking every investment in IT to a tangible business benefit or outcome. While a business' IT departments, facilities departments and other business units may share common goals, their priorities are often different and possibly at odds. N'compass helps its clients achieve their overall business and technology goals by developing strategic solutions that optimize IT investments.

Applied Communications ([www.acmn.com](http://www.acmn.com)) services the IT needs of large enterprises. The company provides technical architecture, project management, network infrastructure, business continuity, network security, infrastructure management, and resident engineering services. Kristi Paul joined Applied Communications in 2000 and was named president of the Applied Communications in 2006. The company was founded in 1983 by Paul's father, Tom Frahm.