

Founders plan to leave Web marketing company

By John Reinan
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A pair of Minneapolis entrepreneurs who built one of the nation's largest Web marketing firms are leaving for a new venture.

Scott Litman and Dan Mallin founded Imaginet in 1991, when the Internet was in its infancy. After several changes of name and ownership over the years, their firm ultimately became Connect@jwt, the digital marketing arm of the New York-based advertising agency J. Walter Thompson.

Connect ranked No. 10 this year among U.S. interactive agencies, with revenue of about \$63 million from clients such as Cargill, 3M, Ford Motor Co. and the U.S. Marines.

But Litman said Friday that he and Mallin decided a year ago to leave when their employment contracts expired,

which happened this week.

"We had a goal to take this company global, and we've done that," said Litman, who had been Connect's North American president. "Now we want to look at some other opportunities."

Litman described the parting as "completely amicable" and said Minneapolis managing director John Doyle will take over leadership of the agency.

Litman and Mallin plan to stay in the Twin Cities and meet with investors about starting a company, which Litman said he couldn't discuss yet. One thing is certain: The two will stick together.

"A great strength for us is the value of our partnership," Litman said. "We've been through a lot of ups and downs together."

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