

How Acronym Solutions and FirstLight Fiber Delivered 400G Wavelengths in Record Time

FirstLight Fiber and **Acronym Solutions** proved what's possible when two like-minded companies combine technical expertise, agility, and a shared commitment to partnership.



Delivering a high-capacity cross-border link on an accelerated schedule takes more than the right route; **it takes the right partner**. Faced with a compressed timeline and industry-wide hardware shortages, Acronym and FirstLight worked together to deliver two 400G deployments in record time.



The Challenge

FirstLight, a leading fibre and network solutions provider serving the northeastern United States and eastern Canada, needed to expand capacity with a new cross-border route into Toronto that was geographically diverse from existing connections. Acronym's network fit the requirement, but the path from contract to delivery would be anything but straightforward.

“

The willingness to talk through options and get creative led me to go back to Acronym.

– Wanda Pillsbury, Director, Carrier Sales Engineering, FirstLight Fiber

FirstLight is very much like Acronym. We fit well together and hit the same market.

– Lubo Vaculik, Managing Director, Sales, Acronym

The two companies had previously collaborated on a 100G wavelength project, establishing trust through open communication and creative problem-solving. That foundation made Acronym the natural choice when a more demanding opportunity emerged.

The project scope was already aggressive: six months to deliver two 400G wavelengths across three sites. Then the timeline shifted, compressing the original six-month delivery into just three months.

The technical scope was equally demanding:

- ▶ As Acronym's first 400G wavelength deployment, existing infrastructure needed to be reengineered while simultaneously operationalizing next-generation optical technology.
- ▶ Industry-wide hardware lead times stretched 20 to 40 weeks, limiting procurement flexibility.

“

Hardware lead times are a continuous concern. Finding the right partner that communicates effectively and frequently was really important.

– Rob Poulton, Director, Access Management, FirstLight Fiber





“

From the start, conversations were clear, honest, creative, and very positive. At no point did we feel in jeopardy. We knew there were challenges, but every step of the way, we felt like two companies in a good partnership.

– Rob Poulton, Director, Access Management, FirstLight Fiber

Despite the pressure, both companies approached the project with a shared mindset: solve problems together, communicate openly, and stay focused on the customer outcome. Roles and communication structure were aligned early, and both organizations operated with full transparency.



The Solution

To meet the accelerated timeline, Acronym adopted a parallel execution model, allowing engineering, procurement, and installation to progress simultaneously, while daily coordination calls enabled rapid decision-making.



Working Around Supply Chain Constraints

One of the first moves was an internal equipment audit. Acronym identified hardware allocated for an internal refresh that could be redirected to the FirstLight project without disrupting other operations. This allowed site builds to begin immediately, eliminating weeks of sequential dependency from the critical path.



Getting Creative with Procurement

With the site preparation underway, Acronym's established relationship with Ciena became critical. Working together, Acronym arranged for Ciena to ship equipment directly to Acronym's Buffalo point-of-presence, bypassing standard distribution channels and reducing cross-border handling and customs time. The equipment arrived pre-configured in a lab environment, ready for immediate installation and consistent setup across all locations.

“

Ciena really came through for us. It normally would've taken a year to get the equipment.

– Lubo Vaculik, Managing Director, Sales, Acronym Solutions



Operating as One Team

Throughout the project, Acronym maintained daily check-ins and gave FirstLight direct access to senior engineering and procurement leadership. The relationship felt less like a vendor engagement and more like a unified delivery team.

“

Acronym didn't miss a beat and were completely willing to explore unconventional solutions. That said a lot about how seriously Acronym considers partnership.

– Rob Poulton, Director, Access Management, FirstLight Fiber



Innovating on the Fly

That unified approach extended naturally into how both teams handled scope changes. When FirstLight requested late in the process that Acronym order cross-connects from the colocation provider in Buffalo, a task outside the original scope, Acronym placed the orders quickly and correctly, resolving the issue without delaying the project.

The technical challenges demanded the same responsiveness. 400G optical technology operates at tolerances that leave near-zero margin for variability, and during photonic span turn-up between Grimsby and Toronto, optical amplifiers flagged fibre reflections that threatened to stall commissioning entirely. Using onboard diagnostic tools to pinpoint the fault location, Acronym's engineers coordinated with the fibre provider and made precise adjustments to stabilize the link and keep the project on schedule.





The Results

In just three months, Acronym and FirstLight delivered:

Two 400G wavelength circuits

Across three sites from Buffalo to Toronto

With zero performance issues or rework

For FirstLight, the outcome was clear: a successful delivery under pressure that met customer expectations with reliability and precision.

For Acronym, the project marked a milestone: the successful deployment of its first two 400G wavelengths. In the process, the team established new delivery frameworks and execution models that now support future high-capacity programs.

Beyond the technical success, the project validated a partnership that had grown from a straightforward 100G engagement into a proven, high-capacity collaboration. It's a partnership built on shared values, complementary networks, and a mutual commitment to delivering for their customers.

“

This project demonstrated our engineering and operational depth in delivering 400G at scale, positioning us for high-capacity network deployments going forward.

– Viral Bhatt & Ameya Sawant, Sr. Network Specialists, Acronym Solutions

A flawless, professional deployment, delivered correctly the first time, in a compressed timeline.

– Rob Poulton & Wanda Pillsbury, FirstLight Fiber

Together, FirstLight and Acronym proved what's possible when two like-minded organizations combine technical expertise, operational agility, and a partnership-first mindset. As bandwidth demand continues to grow, partnerships like this will be essential for regional providers seeking reliable, agile wholesale solutions to extend their networks.

