

Electrical contractor enjoys

Less time in the office

Thanks to the IMS ServiceTrack jobs' control system

Brief background on the contractor

Don Neal Electrical is a commercial, industrial and maintenance electrical contracting company operating out of Mackay in North Queensland. The company also has contracts with several major energy companies and is responsible for electrical installation and maintenance work on service stations and storage tanks in and around Mackay.

Yet another string to its bow is its extensive involvement in the installation and servicing of automatic doors for commercial and disabled users.

On any given day, Don Neal Electrical's six electricians could be working anywhere between Bowen, Sarina and west to Moranbah, a radius of over 250 km.

The problem

Managing the volume of job activity and staying on top of the paperwork was proving to be a nightmare for Don.

Jobs were often charged out at different rates but there was no record of these. Timesheets were not being filled out on the spot which meant that when electricians finally got round to doing so weeks later, they often under-charged their customers. Invoices from wholesalers for parts and equipment purchased often went astray and when they were found, were often illegible.

To add to Don's woes, his daughter - who'd been successfully running the office for several years - had also become critically ill and Don was forced to pick up the pieces in the office.

What he needed was a solution that would eliminate his management and paperwork nightmare.

The IMS solution

In July last year, he implemented the **IMS ServiceTrack** jobs' control system.

A powerful web-based tool, the system allows all service calls and projects to be managed centrally from the time jobs are logged into the system, right through to final invoicing.

Jobs are accessed remotely by staff in the field. Because this information includes full job and address details, technicians can travel direct to their allocated tasks without coming into the office.

On completion of the job electricians are required to record all relevant data such as start and finishing times, materials purchased, and any OH&S issues via their handheld devices. Doing this on the spot, makes for absolute accuracy in that the actual hours worked are recorded, eliminating all guesswork.

Entering the information direct into the system also eradicates unnecessary paperwork and reduces the amount of time traditionally spent filling out time sheets.

Recording by field technicians also happens in real time which means that office staff can immediately feed this information into the payroll and general ledger and begin the billing process immediately.

Installation

Implementation of **IMS ServiceTrack** at Don Neal Electrical involved downloading customer and supplier details from the contractor's MYOB accounting system and then creating an inventory of parts and equipment from scratch.

Once done, the entire system was fully integrated with the MYOB system.

Don Neal field staffers were all issued with easy-to-use PDAs which provided them with access to the central business system, allowing them to view their tasks and to record all job related data such as the time and date a task commenced and was completed through to ordering and purchasing materials. This eliminated unnecessary paperwork by eradicating time sheets and job-cards, dramatically streamlining the administration process.

During implementation, IMS personnel were available online and by phone to ensure all training and implementation issues were addressed. While older field staff members initially found using the PDAs difficult, all agree that they would never go back to the old paper-based system.

While Don is initially using the system for jobs' allocation, quoting, invoicing and monthly testing and tagging, the next step will be to use **OH&S facility** for compliance purposes.

However, it's one step at a time.

The benefits

Since the full implementation of **IMS ServiceTrack** six months ago, productivity has improved dramatically.

Turnaround time on invoicing has increased 100% with all invoicing completed on time at the end of each month. "The most I have to do these days when it comes to the month-end invoicing," says Don, "is a quick check of the overall pricing and some tidying up."

Now that Don has more time on his hands, semi retirement is beginning to look decidedly attractive.

Don estimates his measurable gains as:

100% turnaround time on invoicing
100% time saved managing timesheets
30% increase in billable hours

Comments about IMS

"ServiceTrack has given me more time to get out in the field and pass on my trade experience to others, rather being a slave to paperwork."

Don Neal, Owner, Don Neal Electrical

"ServiceTrack is now ensuring that we're all accountable and appreciate that being accurate has a positive impact on everyone else down the line."

Felicity West, office manager

"Entering everything on-line has put an end to losing invoices from wholesalers or struggling to remember job details."

Shane Phelan, electrician

Enquiries

If you would like to find out how IMS could make an impact on your business, please contact us on the number below:

i-man Pty Ltd

| Phone: [1300 794 818](tel:1300794818)

Email: support@i-man.com.au

Web: www.i-man.com.au