

Plumbing contractor can

## Manage his business better

Thanks to the IMS jobs' control system

### Brief background on the plumbing contractor

Vic Plumbing Services provides plumbing services to real estate and body corporate clients across Victoria.

It is also part of a Green Plumbers Global, an international network of plumbers who specializes in environmental plumbing installations such as rainwater tanks, solar hot-water systems and grey water installations for government, corporate and residential customers.

Initially a sole trader, about five years ago proprietor, Jason Price, began taking on more staff as his business mushroomed. Today he has five plumbers in the field and an office manager.

### The problem

As a sole trader Jason's diary had been his bible. He was particular about recording the hours he spent on each job as well as stapling invoices for the materials he purchased to the appropriate diary pages.

However, his new staff members weren't quite as diligent. They often didn't make entries into their diaries as they completed a job, instead retaining the information in their heads and not recording accurately when they filled out their timesheets.

Time-sheets often didn't reconcile with the job done, with the time on jobs often grossly underestimated. Jason was losing at least six hours a week on each electrician.

Invoices from suppliers were also frequently lost which meant that month end statements from supplies didn't quite marry up with what was being charged back to clients.

With all his paperwork problems Jason was finding that his days were getting longer and longer and on some nights, he was only getting home at midnight. This was playing havoc with the time he usually spent with his two small sons.

What he needed was a solution that would help him manage his staff in the field more effectively and improve the accuracy of paperwork.

### The IMS solution

About nine months ago Jason watched with interest as a close plumber friend checked on his staff via his PDA while having a drink in the pub. His friend was using the **IMS ServiceTrack** jobs' management system.

A powerful web-based tool, **IMS ServiceTrack** manages jobs from a central system.

Jobs keyed into the system are accessed remotely by staff out in the field via their PDAs, wireless PCs or "smart" phones. Because this information includes full job and address details, plumbers can often travel direct without coming into the office.

Once the job is done, field employees are obliged to record all data such as start and finishing times, materials purchased, and any OH&S issues into their PDAs. Doing this on the spot ensures that the actual hours worked are recorded, eliminating any guesswork.

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

Entries by plumbers also happen in real time which means that office staff can immediately feed this information into the payroll and general ledger and begin the billing process.

## **Implementation**

Jason was interested in the system but not entirely convinced.

IMS ServiceTrack's Guy Arrowsmith suggested he trial a few jobs using the system. Jason did and was blown away by just how effective the system was.

Weeks later IMS ServiceTrack was installed at Vic Plumbing Services.

Installation involved downloading the plumbing contractor's customers, suppliers, and parts and equipment inventory details. Once done, the system was linked to the company's accounting software, MYOB.

All plumbers were issued with an easy to use PDA which provided them with access to the system. Time-sheets and job cards were eradicated as everything was done online.

During implementation, IMS personnel were available remotely to ensure all issues were dealt with quickly and effectively. Within 24 hours the entire system was running smoothly.

Because **IMS ServiceTrack** is hosted by the service provider, i-man Pty Ltd, and does not live on the users' computer system, all software and hardware problems are avoided. Should Vic Plumbing Services' PC crash due to a virus or hardware problem their data is secure and available at all times via any PC or electronic device with internet access.

## **The benefits to Vic Plumbing**

With the implementation of **IMS ServiceTrack**, Jason found out very quickly that he could manage his staff much more effectively. He knew exactly where they were and what they were doing at any given time.

Diaries and time sheets were ditched and suppliers emailed their invoices direct, eliminating the risk of invoices and month end statements not matching up.

Jason has also installed his laptop in his truck which means there's no need to travel back to the office to check the status of jobs.

Implementing **IMS ServiceTrack** has also given Jason the confidence to tender for a major BHP contract via Green Plumbers Global to install 50-60 rainwater tanks at scout halls in Melbourne and another 40 halls in Canberra.

The contract means that Jason and half his crew will be spending 4-6 weeks in Canberra. What this will mean is that he'll be managing two separate work crews in two very different locations simultaneously something that just six months ago would have been totally inconceivable.

In fact, so buoyed is Jason with opportunities **IMS ServiceTrack** have opened up for him that he's also hoping to be tender for rainwater tank installations in other parts of the country.

*What IMS ServiceTrack has meant to Vic Plumbing Services:*

200% increase in productivity  
100% turnaround time on invoicing  
25% increase in billable hours

## **Candid comments about IMS**

*"IMS ServiceTrack has given me back my life. I can now leave the office at 5.30 each evening and spend some quality time with my two boys again!"*

**Jason Price, Owner, Vic Plumbing Services**

*"IMS ServiceTrack allows me to move from job to job quickly and without having to constantly check back into the office."*

**Peter T, Supervising Plumber, Vic Plumbing Services**

## **Enquiries**

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

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