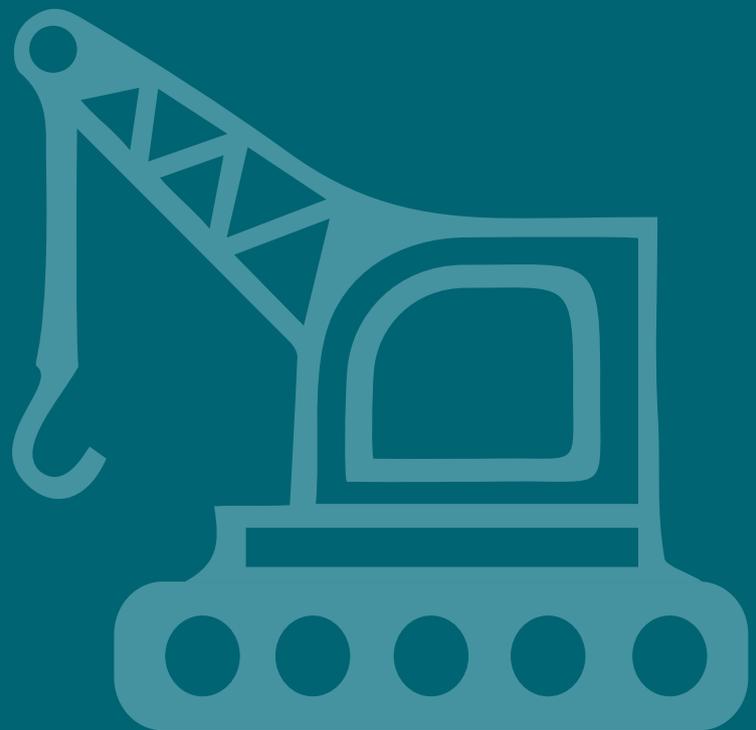# CONSTRUCTION
CASE STUDIES

A deeper look at how small businesses use digital technology to have a positive impact on the way they run their business.

AVALA ELECTRICAL

Avala Electrical Ltd is an owner-operated electrical services company based in Auckland, delivering small residential service jobs through to large commercial scale electrical installations. Starting the business two years ago, owner Ivan Jevtić says he did not want to get bogged down in paperwork and administration. With this in mind, he began utilising cloud-based software for managing his business from day one.

Ivan selected an off the shelf, purpose built product , cloud-based KATIPOLT, for online job management, which was built by a tradesperson for tradespeople. With some basic training, he has found the tool easy to navigate and says no further customisations have been required. From job start up, through to purchasing and invoicing, Ivan is able to complete all of his job management administration while on the road, via his tablet.

A key benefit for Ivan's small business has been the ability to invoice while on the job. Ivan says that as a tradesperson, "you just want to be out there being productive". Using cloud based technology to run his business has allowed Ivan time to get jobs for clients completed and avoid spending too much time and resource on administration.

To save even more time and resources, Avala's job management system is integrated with its cloud-based financial system, removing any need for double handling. For example, photos are stored online against relevant jobs, providing important evidence of work completed.

Avala Electrical is planning to take on staff in the near future. Ivan will be able to oversee all jobs remotely and efficiently, by using a cloud-based job management system.

Ivan notes that new functionality is added to the job management system as industry needs change and evolve. Job completion certifications are the next process to be brought online – they are the only manual administrative task Ivan still currently undertakes.

CASE STUDY

ISAAC CONSTRUCTION

Isaac Construction consists of over 200 specialists, delivering construction, surfacing, transport, quarrying and professional contract management services throughout Canterbury.

The Isaac team are in the process of implementing a few key digital initiatives. The team has most recently focussed on using technology to assist with improving processes and decision making, with the aim of increasing efficiency throughout the business. CEO Jeremy Dixon acknowledges that equipping staff with the right technology will help them do great work and ultimately result in productivity gains.

All the crews out in the field have iPads, so they have recently moved from using their previous paper forms to electronic. The team have chosen a cloud-based, off the shelf app for producing their online forms, with some customisation to ensure the functionality is fit for Isaac Construction's purpose. In particular, the new online forms are being utilised for timesheeting and recording health and safety activities. There are forms for daily hazards and risks, site audits and incident reporting.

The new online forms are resulting in greater reporting and control, with fewer errors because of real time recording, availability and tracking of important health and safety data.

In addition to their online forms, the team are about to launch a cloud-based competency management system. By logging into the new system via iPads, the foreman can: check that staff have appropriate licenses; review training records, and check qualifications and competencies. Until now, this process has been manual and took the foreman valuable time to complete.

The Isaac team continue to seek out further tech innovations, and will soon launch their IoT ("Internet of Things") project. With the connection of machinery and network devices, valuable real-time company vehicle data will soon be made available via online dashboards, with embedded sensors and actuators (the component responsible for moving and controlling the machinery) located in the vehicles. The bespoke use of intelligently connected devices will result in being able to turn data into action to improve vehicle fleet efficiency and use.

PRO-SPEC ELECTRICAL

Ten years ago, after becoming qualified as an electrician and made redundant in the same week, Steve Solley set out to build his own family-run electrical company, Pro-Spec Electrical. Over time, the business has grown steadily, and now employs 5 staff.

As the business expanded and jobs became bigger, so did the pile of paperwork. With priority being placed on getting the work done and quotes and sending out invoices to keep the business ticking over, Steve found he was neglecting his management of back costing and financial forecasting. This meant Steve had to wait until year end to figure out if the business was profitable.

He knew there had to be a better way. Steve set out to find a purpose built software solution that would remove as much of the manual paperwork as possible. Following some research, including joining an online industry forum, Steve found a well-reviewed fit for purpose software called Fergus that had been developed by a tradesperson.

Starting in 2015, Steve began a gradual transition to the new software from the old, paper-reliant system. He understood that there would be an increase in the time he spent on admin and management before he would begin to experience true gains, as using the software initially took more time than it saved while shifting records and becoming familiar with the new system. It took Steve approximately one year to fully migrate.

The productivity gains since then have proven transformational for Steve's business. Back costing, which previously took four hours, is now produced at the click of a button. Quoting, managing accounts and forecasting, as well as tracking labour hours in real time, is also now made easier, needing only minimal interaction between Steve and his staff.

Staff enter their time on phone apps while on their jobs, which goes straight into the time sheeting software functionality. This allows Steve to identify where a job is progressing too slowly or may have been underpriced.

The Pro-Spec team continues to look for new ways to improve the business. They have recently implemented a code of compliance certificate module from Fergus, which has reduced the time it takes for staff to produce these certificates and means they can be stored in the cloud to meet regulatory requirements.

Other key digital innovations Steve and the team are making use of include a cloud-based platform for staff payroll and a shared cloud-based calendar, which enables the team to manage and share schedules easily while on the road.

Steve comments that, in addition to time-saving, use of the fit for purpose software solution has made running the business so much easier and less stressful, removing the worry that 'you're doing it wrong'.

CASE STUDY

PRO SPEC
ELECTRICAL

www.pro-spec.co.nz