

Halkitis Brothers

Significant network upgrade has transformative effect for Halkitis Brothers' business



Calibre One providing Halkitis Brothers with dramatic network performance and security improvements for continued business success

Established in Darwin in 1960 as a civil works company, Halkitis Brothers (HB) has expanded into a group of companies incorporating HB Concrete, HB Quarry, HB Blocks and Pavers, HB Transport and HB Maintenance.

HB is now the largest producer of concrete in the Northern Territory. The company's quarry operation has its own 200-year supply of granite with the capacity to produce around 100,000 tonnes of material per month and up to 4000 tonnes of aggregate per day. The group undertakes massive logistical projects, including the production and transportation of

over 690,000 tonnes of rock used to protect the Ichthys LNG Project's underwater gas export pipeline in Darwin Harbour.

Connectivity Issues

Staff at HB head office in Darwin were able to access the applications and data they needed to operate effectively. However, users were struggling to connect at the group's other offices around Darwin and its remote quarry sites. The company relied on an ageing Telstra MPLS network (Business DSL copper) at its two main sites in Darwin and NextG services at its other offices. Multiple PSTN analogue lines serviced its IP telephony system.

"Our file servers, application servers and mail servers are all in head office and it was a huge headache for staff in our other sites to connect," said Mehdi Ghaffari, Block Manager at HB, who is also responsible for managing the group's information and communications technology (ICT).

Challenge:

An outdated network and communications infrastructure that was costly to operate and made it difficult for Halkitis Brothers to effectively operate its diversified business interests across the Northern Territory.

Solution:

Design and deployment of a new wide area network, provision and integration of new Telstra communications technology, implementation of new Cisco routers and security appliances, and migration of existing IP phone system from PSTN to new SIP services.

Benefits:

- Network speeds five times faster than previous environment
- Improvements in staff productivity and satisfaction, and workplace safety management
- Greater levels of security and control of devices on the network
- Significant reduction in overall communications costs

Calibre One Case Study

"If our staff needed access to files or data, it was easier for them to travel into the office to get the information."

For example, one of the HB quarries is 100km from head office. Each day a staff member would transport that day's delivery dockets and reports by car from the quarry to head office because bandwidth limitations prevented delivery over the network.

Speed

To alleviate its issues, HB realised that it needed a significant boost to the speed, capacity and reliability of its wide area network (WAN). Telstra recommended that HB should talk to Calibre One, an experienced Telstra Gold Business and Enterprise Partner who could solve HB's connectivity issues and improve communications and network operations.

"We were given three months to complete the project, which was pretty ambitious," said Darren Gore, Business Development Manager, Calibre One.

The project was completed by Calibre One on-time and within budget, with great support from Telstra and Cisco.

"We are now getting internal network speeds that are five times faster than we had before. It's beautiful," said Ghaffari. "Transferring big files like construction plans that used to take more than 40 minutes now transfer in under two."

More critically, a staff member no longer has to do the 200km roundtrip every day from the Mt Bundy Station quarry to head office, saving 52,000km in travel and over 520 working hours every year. Eliminating just that one task has saved the company an estimated \$65,000 per annum. Now, the data can be transferred directly across the WAN, allowing accounts staff to process the orders and generate invoices more quickly. Management staff also have greater visibility on daily activity and performance.

Security

The new Cisco Meraki appliances have provided HB with far greater control of its network. HB is

now able to control and filter all internet usage from every device connecting to the network.

"We have visibility and control over every device connecting to the Internet and our email servers no longer suffer from junk mail attacks. It's magnificent," said Ghaffari.

Improved Quality of Work

With the cut-over of its IP telephony system to SIP trunking, HB has been able to assign direct in-dial numbers for each staff member and set up 100 number ranges for each of its divisions. Now, it's simple for staff to transfer calls internally and HB can easily set up dedicated numbers for customers to call to place orders or contact different departments directly.

The improvements in communications, network speeds and reliability have resulted in a 21.5% reduction in HB's annual communications costs. More importantly, the improvements have had a major impact on the working environment and staff satisfaction levels. It's become far easier for staff at all sites to access the applications and information they need, to collaborate with each other and to complete computer-based tasks more rapidly. One stand-out has been in the improvements that HB has made to ensuring workplace safety. Now, the cloud-based occupational health and safety (OH&S) platform that HB uses is far more easily accessible on-site, providing all staff with the safety policies, maintenance history and other data they need on a day-to-day basis.

Future Plans

HB has a large vehicle fleet, with more than 60 vehicles on the road. The company's future challenge will be how to increase the mobile capabilities of their network and move to a completely digital enterprise.

For now though, Ghaffari is happy with the improvements the company is seeing with its new network: "I'm not going to change it!" However, HB will continue to look for ways in which new technologies can be deployed to continually increase its network speeds.



Mehdi Ghaffari, Block Manager
Halkitis Brothers

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