



GISBORNE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# BIG DISTANCES NO PROBLEM FOR CONNECTED COUNCIL

**"Our relatively new leadership team are all pro-technology and were keen to adopt a solution that would reduce our complexity and help us collaborate despite being spread across a number of offices."**

Jenine Ritchie, IT Manager - Gisborne District Council

Behind the Business

# PERSONALISED LYNC DEPLOYMENT KEY TO IMPROVING COUNCIL'S COLLABORATION

## Thanks to Spark's Microsoft Lync solution.

**Thanks to some clever use of technology the Gisborne District Council has recently calculated savings of more than \$400,000 and improved staff productivity - simply by deploying a new ICT solution.**

Travelling across Gisborne to meet with colleagues located in other buildings was proving to be time-consuming and costly says Gisborne District Council's IT Manager, Jenine Ritchie.

"Last year a third of staff were forced into temporary offices after the building they were located in was deemed earthquake-prone," explains Jenine.

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**"From design and delivery, right through to licencing and support, Spark has got it covered"**

Jenine Ritchie, IT Manager - Gisborne District Council

"That brought our total number of offices to five; with around 320 staff you can imagine the mounting travel costs and the loss in productivity."

The Council's on-premise phone system was also not helping things. Not only was it approaching its end of life, it had also been cutting out and leaving some staff without phones. And if faults occurred or updates were required, a technician would have to travel from Napier to help.

At two other sites, the council was leasing a telephony service, which was only an interim solution and not a good use of budget long-term, says Jenine.

### Lync me up

Jenine says that the council IT team does not employ specific voice expertise so it turned to Spark to assist in deploying its new enterprise voice solution, Lync Server 2013.

"We deemed change management as paramount to the success of the project, we couldn't afford any significant impacts on the organisation", explains Jenine. "Spark had the ability to design and implement a voice solution that would achieve our goals."

### About Gisborne District Council:

- Largest district council in the North Island
- Serves a population of more than 43,000
- 320 staff
- Staff spread across nine locations
- 80% of staff are Lync users
- 10% growth in mobile workers yearly

When asked about why she thinks the project was a success, Jenine points towards the fantastic working relationship between the council and Spark coupled with some thorough pre-planning and testing.

"We carried out a pilot which let us deal with any integration issues upfront. The rollout was staggered over a six-week period. Staff attended training sessions, returning from each to discover their new telephony tools loaded on their desktop and ready to use. The process was relatively seamless and having IT support walking the floor helped to tackle any teething issues," adds Jenine.

## A new way of connecting

Council staff are connected across one communication interface. They can instant message each other and share screens and documents, while working from a range of devices, in or out of the office. Remote meetings are pulled together with speed, using either audio or video conferencing.

New contact centre software that was deployed by Spark is allowing the council to produce customised, real-time reports. Statistics such as number of calls waiting and agents available is helping the council to continually improve its public service.

"The management of our phone system can now be done remotely," adds Jenine. "This saves us a huge amount of expense and personally gives me peace of mind that things are working at their best. There was never any question about taking on Spark to manage Lync for us."

**Choosing Microsoft Lync solution from Spark means choosing a people-centred solution that is simple, connected, flexible and secure.**

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Excluding travel, the council has calculated savings of more than \$400,000. Jenine says this is just the tip of the iceberg given the recent announcement. "We've just had news that our main building will be demolished, meaning that staff at these sites will need to re-locate to two or more separate offices; this will bring our total number of locations from five to more than seven."

With so many locations and temporary offices Jenine says a new data centre is next on the roadmap, and Spark will be the council's ICT partner to help in this journey.

- Spark has won Microsoft NZ Partner of the Year 2011, 2012, and 2013
- Spark staff are Gold certified and specialise in Lync deployment