



McKechnie
Transforming Aluminium

BOOSTING BUSINESS WITH FAST FIBRE

Fast internet, network resources and optimised phone systems equate to happy clients and happy staff, leaving McKechnie Aluminium to keep doing what it does best, from foundry to value added product.

Behind the Business

HIGH BANDWIDTH | KEEPS THE WHEELS OF INDUSTRY | TURNING

Thanks to Spark's innovative technology solutions.

When you're working with the aluminium skeletons of high performance beasts you can't let poor infrastructure slow you down, especially if you're Australasia's leading fully integrated aluminium extrusion specialist.

McKechnie Aluminium promises its clients perfection from foundry to fabrication, whether they're looking for a bull bar, baby buggy or ladder. To deliver on this pledge some fairly robust systems are required.



In order to service the needs of both clients and staff who increasingly rely on speed, the New Plymouth-based company upgraded to fibre connections at its four sites across New Zealand.

The prompt to do so was driven both externally by a changing commercial environment, and internally with the 50-year old business transforming itself.

When IT manager Alan Clarke joined McKechnie Aluminium 27 years ago, the company operated on a 9.6kb dial-up connection between New Plymouth and Auckland.

"We basically had dumb terminals; very basic Twinax cables running around the plant. In order to get stuff from Australia they used to send a diskette and we'd upload it here."

For many years basic bandwidth satisfied the company's needs, firing data across a WAN to Auckland. "Typically these were emails and small files - no voice or anything like that, just people entering data into a system without really having to view files," says Clarke.

A time for change

Today, however, McKechnie's operations demand far higher bandwidth, driven by the use of larger,

About McKechnie Aluminium:

- Australasia's leading fully integrated aluminium extrusion specialist
- Established in 1958
- New Plymouth-based with branches and sales representation across New Zealand and Australia
- Over 300 employees
- Supplies products around the world including New Zealand, Australia, the Pacific Islands, USA and Europe.

more dataintensive files, and a desire to adopt voice-over-IP.

"We had a situation with a greater use of CAD-type images. We also needed to change our phone system and needed decent bandwidth with a quality of service agreement to get voice-over-IP between New Plymouth and Auckland," explains Clarke.

With McKechnie dealing increasingly with the automotive industry, drawings were a necessity and were getting more complicated. With drawings being received and created daily, the volume of shared files was growing.

“We needed faster internet services in order for people to do their job. The only solution was to get fibre - it was the only way to go.”

Alan Clarke, IT Manager, McKechnie Aluminium

McKechnie Aluminium now boasts a 10Mbps connection at the New Plymouth head office, with up to 5Mbps into each of its other sites and a 10Mbps connection to the internet.

“Our bandwidth had reached its capacity on copper and we needed to get fibre into the business in order to increase it,” says Clarke.

“We needed to update our phone system, we needed a reliable connection between our different sites, we needed quality of service and we needed fast internet access in order for people to do their job. The only solution was to get fibre. It was the only way to go.”

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

If you're ready to create better connections for your customers, speak to your Client Manager or call us on:



0800 694 364

Overwhelming support

The switch to fibre received immediate and overwhelmingly positive feedback from staff seeing a vast improvement, as the system solved a lot of internal frustration and resulted in less downtime.

“It enabled users to have a decent upload speed with a vastly improved response time, allowing them to view drawings,” says Clarke.

“We were also able to actually have voice-over-IP and the connection was reliable. We used to often have users go offline in Auckland and those issues seem to have been cured by the new bandwidth.”

The business case for the upgrade to fibre was helped by Spark proposing a multi-service access approach, where multiple services use the same access point. In the case of McKechnie a single fibre line was combined to include internet access, WAN and IP voice traffic.

The move to voice-over-IP has been particularly beneficial, Clarke reports. With any business, cash flow is crucial and phone bills can often play havoc with tidy accounting. By the time you realise that calls have accelerated in one department it's too late to do anything about it, he explains.

Spark services deployed:

- WAN Services
- Internet Services
- Integrated Office
- Optimise decision-making

Simplified billing

According to Clarke, the way McKechnie uses its phone system has changed radically since switching to Spark's Optimise service, which simplifies telecommunications billing.

“This has made it so much easier in terms of knowing where we are with usage. We can view all our bills online, and can analyse the minutes of different users and parts of the business,” says Clarke.

“We have a set idea of where we are with calls so we know what our costs are going to be under Optimise. We can keep control of certain areas and it's always transparent what we're being billed.”