Fast-Growing SA Builder Futureproofs IT with Calvert

Introduction

Fast-growing SA commercial construction firm Mykra has increased productivity, improved customer service and eliminated waste by engaging Calvert Technologies to overhaul its technology systems.

Mykra Pty Ltd, named South Australia's fastest growing company in the 2017 SA Business Index, is a full-service construction and maintenance firm that grew its revenue by 84 per cent in 2016-17.

Notable Mykra projects include; the landmark water feature at Adelaide Airport, McDonalds Salisbury, Stirling Library and the new Rural Press printing facility at Murray Bridge.

Mykra - a spinoff business from Cox Constructions, which was established by the Cox family more than 60 years ago - now employs about 60 people and recorded a 2017 turnover of $32 million.

Previous Issues

Despite booming business, antiquated systems were holding the business back when third generation member of the family firm, Callan Cox, became General Manager several years ago. Paper-based systems and poor integration between the company's core network and mobile devices such as notebooks limited its efficiency, undermined customer service and created business risk.

"The old IT kit was quite cumbersome. It was data intensive, using a lot of 3G and 4G mobile data to keep people operating in the field, so that was a big cost."

"We had to manage processes so people were not using too much data and not taking too long to get the data they needed."

"There were so many inefficient workarounds. Field staff would come into the office, download a file and then work on it offline permanently, so there was a data disconnect between field staff and office staff. We were not working on the most up-to-date information. Also, there was a business risk if someone dropped or lost their laptop."

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How Calvert Helped

So, as Mykra started a year of award-winning record growth during 2016-17, it also embarked on an epic journey to upgrade its ageing technology systems after Calvert Technologies founder, Dean Calvert, undertook an audit of its IT infrastructure in March 2016.

Callan said going with Calvert was a future-proofing decision. "We wanted the business to get ahead of competitors in our marketplace," he said. "We had to spend money to consolidate and improve our systems, so we can sustain the growth we achieved."

During the 10 months from June 2016, Calvert Technologies migrated Mykra's on-premises Microsoft Exchange email system to Microsoft's Office 365 cloud platform; installed a high-speed Internet link with security including a WatchGuard firewall appliance; and migrated on-premises servers into Telstra's cloud hosting platform. Calvert also installed a state-of-the-art Datto business continuity appliance that provides backups and guarantees rapid recovery from potential disruptions such as ransomware, viruses or hardware failures.

In a state where electricity supplies are a topic of daily conversation, Calvert has also made Mykra's operation more resilient to power outages by moving its critical infrastructure on to cloud platforms that will keep running even if the lights are out in SA.

A critical component of the infrastructure overhaul was implementing secure, high performance wireless connectivity in Mykra's recently expanded building, so people can quickly, easily and safely work from anywhere. The new IT environment also allows Mykra's supervisors, project managers and workers to get up to date access to key construction job information easily and securely from any of their multiple building sites.

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How Calvert Helped

Callan Cox said Mykra's more responsive IT systems had dramatically improved productivity. "Not waiting for things to load has increased our productivity, produced greater employee engagement and reduced frustration," he said.

"The biggest benefit is the improved efficiency of our staff. All employees have laptops which they can use to get into work servers when they are out on site. It also supports flexible working arrangements, so single parents with sick kids can fire up from home to keep up with their work."

"Our new systems let people work from anywhere. This is really useful for younger staff who haven't seen construction sites running. They can now spend more time on the work site and see how a column connects to a beam. They can be on site much more whereas before it was just a matter of having to spend more time in the office. Paperwork is no longer getting in the way of productivity."

"People are using technology properly because its now easy, which has taken some of the worry out of my job. Mistakes can cost thousands of dollars."

"With the right systems to back our team up, I can manage them more effectively because the system is not getting in their way."

"At the end of the day, it's all about better customer service. It gives us the ability to instantly access the customer's information, no matter where the guys are. They can dial into the system, pull up the customer's drawings, spin around their notebook and show the client straight away. It's very professional."

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How Calvert Helped

"We were clear about what we wanted to achieve but I am always quite nervous about technology rollouts. There are so many salesmen around that you become a bit wary about whether their promises will be delivered. Calvert delivered on its promises." Callan said the Calvert team delivered excellent and responsive service. "We had a couple of key contact people at Calvert who knew our system and our staff," he said.

"They can go in, sit with someone and go on their way again or they can dial in remotely. They are very responsive."

"What makes Calvert stand out goes back to their leadership team. They are specialists, they know how businesses and industries work and can research solutions to our problems. They don't flog technology - they apply technology to what you do to improve your business."

About Calvert Technologies

Calvert Technologies, a multi-competency Microsoft Partner, provides high quality information technology support and consultancy services to businesses throughout Australia. The privately-owned company focuses on providing quality solutions that don't "break the bank", so that its clients enjoy real value and productivity with a low total cost of ownership. Visit the Calvert website at www.calvert.net.au.
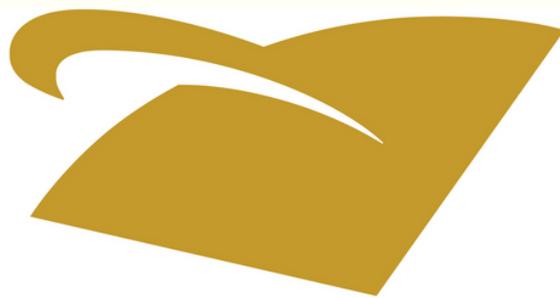
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