



Nind Electrical

Editors note: Teletrac Inc. and Navman Wireless are now merged as a global telematics powerhouse. This content was created prior to the unification of both brands.

Udderly urgent—fast fixes for farmers

Anyone who has seen 700 cows waiting to be milked when a platform has broken down in the milking shed knows that it's an urgent situation.

South Island firm Nind Electrical Services knows better than most – they are the people that make the dash to sometimes remote farms to get the milking shed up and running again.

The business started in Ron Nind's garage in 1977 and now Nind Electrical has offices in Invercargill, Dunedin, Queenstown and Christchurch, which focus on residential, commercial and industrial clients, while Nind Dairy Services looks after dairy farms throughout Southland and Otago.

General Manager Steve Winter says that the growth of the company—now with 110 staff and 80 light vehicles—required a more high-tech approach to managing the fleet and the workflow.

“Navman Wireless is definitely a management tool—the app helps us to keep an eye on the business.”
Steve Winter, General Manager

“A lot of the work we do for farmers is critical. If a water pump or an effluent pond has stopped working, they need it sorted straight away or work on the farm is held up. To meet that need we had to be much more efficient, so we got Navman Wireless.”

Steve says that each of the vans now has a GPS vehicle tracking device installed and each branch uses the Navman Wireless fleet management software.

Fleet at a glance

With a big fleet spread across thousands of square kilometers of the South Island, Steve says that being able to see the whole fleet on screen has been a big benefit.

“When we get a call from a farmer, for example, we can look them up in the Navman Wireless system, find their exact location, then see which electrician is closest. We can often phone our electrician - while we have the farmer on hold – to see how quickly they can get there, then let the farmer know immediately.”

Steve adds that the fleet tracking app for mobiles has been hugely useful for Nind.

“Our foremen use the mobile app all the time. It helps them to monitor staff and plan for the next day. If work is progressing more slowly than expected, the foreman can see who is nearby and pull more people on to a job if needed.

"Navman Wireless is definitely a management tool – the app helps the managers and the foreman to keep an eye on the whole business."

Maintenance made easy

In the early days maintenance consisted of one guy walking around each vehicle and doing manual checks. That worked fine, but with more vehicles it became a full-time job.

"When you have a big fleet, it's important to keep on top of maintenance," says Steve. "We knew that if we could automate a lot of the maintenance tracking we could handle it much more efficiently and reduce downtime and serious breakdowns."

Nind staff use the Navman Wireless Dashboard to track all the WOF and RUC requirements, as well as regular servicing and repairs.

"We get a spreadsheet sent each month with the actual km for each vehicle which is then used to update a master spreadsheet for the fleet. From that we can see the average km per annum for each vehicle. This allows us to plan for vehicle purchasing.

"We can keep the kms down by switching the vehicles around, for example, from a worker who travels a lot to remote sites, to a worker who is based around town and therefore does a lot less mileage. Our dairy guys could easily clock up 50,000km a year, whereas the guys in town it's more like 15 to 20,000km."

Better health and safety practices

Steve says that Navman Wireless helps to keep track of staff working late or in remote areas – making sure they get home safely.

"This is particularly true of our staff that work in the dairy business, as they are often out in remote areas. If they get stuck, or have been on a site for an unusually long period of time, then the foreman or Branch Manager can phone the staff member to check that they are ok." The Nind Group currently has Tertiary Accreditation under the ACC Workplace Safety Management Program. The ACC program requires Nind to be audited every two years across 10 different areas of safety.

"ACC auditors come onsite to audit and to interview our staff and we have to be able to prove and document our safety procedures. The level of proof that Navman Wireless provides in terms of vehicle maintenance, safety and how the vehicles are driven, is a huge asset to us for compliance with the ACC audit process." Using Navman Wireless, Nind has also identified speed as a significant hazard for the business.

"We had a feeling some of our staff were speeding, but once we got Navman Wireless we could see exactly what was happening. Now when someone goes too fast, we get a speed alert through the Navman Wireless system. We are able to have individual conversations with our staff as needed. We've really curbed excessive speeding."

Improving business performance

Using a GPS fleet management system has helped Nind to improve accountability of managers and foremen, because the Navman Wireless system is giving them a lot more information about the people they are managing.

"I think Navman Wireless has added a level of transparency to our business, and it is making us run the business more efficiently," says Steve. "But ultimately Navman Wireless is a tool for improving customer service."

Benefits

- Seeing the whole fleet enables more efficient customer service
- Better management of vehicle maintenance and usage
- Improved safety for workers through monitoring of location and speed
- Provides proof points for ACC Workplace Safety Management Program