

Minecom Australia Pty Ltd

URL: www.tassie.net.au/minecom/

This business uses electronic commerce technologies to:

- maintain international customer relationships
- provide 24hr instant access to product and technical information.

Mining communications systems

Minecom began in 1988 as a family business, North West Communications (NWC). They have grown from a small family business to a company employing close to twenty people Australia wide. **Minecom** is considered a market leader in underground communications in Australia. NWC received the 1995 **Telstra and Tasmanian Government Small Business Award for the Best Manufacturer with less than 100 employees.**

Minecom Australia provides fully integrated communication systems for above and below ground operations. Their niche market is the mining industry. **Minecom** can provide instant communications between management, work crew, miners and maintenance staff. They can send and receive telephone calls while underground. With the use of radio modems, data transmission is also possible between surface and underground.

Accelerating customer service

Initially **Minecom** had a few personal computers used for financial applications, quotations and office work. The staff soon found that the office data was scattered independently amongst the few machines. It became inefficient to house the business' information in this manner. Twelve months ago their computing system was revamped. They now have eight PCs connected to a central server. All information is located on the server and can be accessed from any of the workstations. This has enabled a platform for efficient information flow and a foundation for electronic commerce activities. **Minecom** uses the Internet to enhance communications between field workers and business partners around the world.

Better business links

Minecom uses the Internet's ICQ software to communicate with their business partners in Canada. This is a free service available on the Internet, which alerts you in real time when friends and colleagues are connected to the Internet. You can chat, send messages and files. It allows **Minecom** staff to chat with Canadian counterparts in real time for a fraction of the cost of traditional conference calls. Minecom's field workers are often updating equipment in remote mines around Australia and the world. Previously any updates were sent out on floppy disk via postal mail. A technician may have had to wait several days for updates. Now, field workers can have their updates emailed directly to them. The update scenario can happen in minutes compared to days and at a fraction of the cost.

Enquiries received over the Internet can be answered efficiently. Product information and quotations can be collated from Minecom's central database. This information can easily be emailed or faxed back to interested customers at short notice. Sales staff also have the ability to dial directly into the central server to download product information or specifications. When the appropriate security is in place, staff will be able to download information from the server using the Internet, utilising a cost-effective form of data transmission.

Instantaneous communication

The ability to send information or quotes via email to interested parties has resulted in considerable savings in both time and money. ICQ provides a low-budget form of call

conferencing for trading partners around the world. ICQ also provides a communication channel where multiple business partners can discuss business in real-time and at minimal cost. Enabling field workers to receive software updates for equipment via email has saved valuable time and resources. Field workers are used more efficiently, they no longer have to wait days to receive an update, customer service has improved, problems are resolved promptly, and **Minecom** can concentrate resources elsewhere.

Minecom also designs custom cases to house their communication equipment. The design of the casework is sent via email to a designer in Sydney for refinement. Once **Minecom** has endorsed the final design, it is sent electronically to a fabricator in Brisbane. The final product is then shipped back to Tasmania for distribution. **Minecom** coordinates the design and receives the finished product without anyone having to physically leave head office.

Minecom has successfully integrated different aspects of electronic commerce into its business processes. Electronic Commerce has improved Minecom's business processes by promoting efficiency, reducing costs and enhancing customer service by reducing reaction times to problems and customer enquiries.