

CURRENT AFFAIRS

News and views from Ergo Consulting Ltd

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A STRATEGIC MOVE



At the start of August, Ergo moved into new premises at Level 1, 106 Carlton Gore Road. The move was the culmination of lengthy negotiations to secure the entire first floor, meticulous planning by directors Chris and Nigel, and a two month refit overseen by office manager Lisa Pilot. The new offices are on the corner of Morgan Street, only two doors along from the old offices. Although only a short distance the move is strategic. The company now has greater visibility and further growth potential.

In the six years Ergo has been based in Newmarket, the company has grown from a staff of six to over 20. Space had become an on-going issue. The new offices have double the floor area of the previous office, making the move a welcome development for Ergo's staff. The additional room gives the company the ability to take on extra

staff when needed, pursue its graduate training programme, and honour a commitment to employ engineering students on summer placement where possible.

The fit-out provided a fantastic opportunity to customise the space in accordance with Ergo's requirements and philosophy. It has allowed the company to organise better along divisional lines. The Power Systems, Control Systems and the CAD Departments each now have their own defined areas. A

number of meeting rooms makes it easier to liaise with clients, and the company finally has a room large enough for its in-house training sessions. Although mostly open-plan, the offices have glassed-off 'quiet' areas, and a lunchroom removed from office noise.

The company has upgraded to a new telephone system, with the result that the phone and fax numbers have changed. All Ergo staff have been allocated new DDIs. Clients who are unsure about a phone number should contact reception on **09 365 9700** for assistance.

Client parking is still adjacent to 4 Morgan Street. There are now three visitor car parks instead of one – look for the Ergo logo.

STAFF PROFILE: REHAN NAYAGAM

The latest addition to the Power Systems department is Rehan Nayagam, a University of Auckland graduate in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. He comes to Ergo after four and a half years with transmitter specialist Landis + Gyr where he worked first as a Project & Service Engineer, then as Project & Service Manager. During his time there he gained valuable experience in equipment inspection, commissioning, report writing, electrical design and staff management.

Apart from this experience, Rehan sees his particular strengths as being hardworking and good at building relationships. He credits his role as church music director for giving him useful management experience outside of the engineering field. He is looking forward to being part of the Power Systems team at Ergo.



THE ERGO PROMISE

We will...

- take responsibility for our designs and own up to our mistakes
- be generous with our knowledge and encourage developing engineers
- provide accurate information and voice any doubts or uncertainties we have.

PUMP STATIONS – OUR TRACK RECORD TO DATE

Over the past six years Ergo has undertaken more than thirty-five pump station condition assessments, specifications and designs. These have been largely for storm water, wastewater, and water treatment applications. While some have been upgrades, most have been new installations.

These projects have been for a range of clients. Typically the clients have been local body authorities, such as the Hamilton City Council, Otago Regional Council, Waikato District Council, Hauraki District Council and Far North District Council.

A range of clients means a range of hardware specifications. Councils up and down the country vary widely in terms of their equipment and infrastructure. This has not been a problem for Ergo, as the company has dealt with most variants of equipment over the years.

Client satisfaction and design excellence are high on Ergo's agenda. Some years ago directors Chris Turney and Nigel Stevenson decided to develop an in-house 'library of

standards' based on tried and tested specifications and designs. 'In a sense the standards are an attempt to codify best practice, and to anticipate clients' electrical, instrumentation and control system requirements,' explains Chris.

It has taken time and effort to create the standards, but the investment has paid off. The library now houses fully detailed and documented specifications and design drawings for almost any variant of hardware – whether motor starters, instrument loops, or PLC/telemetry interfaces.

'No two pump stations are alike. Every



Raw water pumping station

project has its unique engineering challenges,' says Nigel. 'Nevertheless our standards provide a very useful starting point in the design and specification process. The value to Ergo's clients is a complete, efficient and cost-effective design which we know will work.'

A SPECIFICATION FOR DESIGN

An Ergo mantra is "no one should question the invoice". In my experience a client queries an invoice when it is higher than expected, or when the work is not perceived to be value for money. If the amount of an invoice takes a client by surprise we may not have highlighted variations to the contract at appropriate times. Likewise issues around value for money can stem from a poorly communicated scope of work. Hence our mantra.

Consultants typically spend a great deal of time on equipment and installation specifications, but little on design expectations. It is a difficult area, even when doing repeat work for a client. In order to put in a competitive price, consultants are guided by previous work undertaken. There is an assumption that the same level of design will be appropriate for the current project (not always the case) and that a common understanding exists regarding the detail (unlikely unless the same client project manager is involved).

It is easy to define the documents that are required for a project - whether single line drawings, installation specifications, cable schedules or schematics. It is much harder to define design quality. Despite the inherent difficulties, Ergo is working towards a specification for design. We envisage the design specification as a spreadsheet of quality options available to a client, such as:

- Number of reviews (1 to 10)
- Level of integration with existing designs (none to complete redraw)
- Level of as-building of existing plant (mark-up of photos or complete as-built)
- Number of options to be considered (1 to 10)
- Number of meetings (based on hours and subsequent time to document)

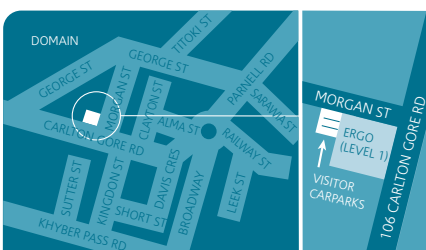
Clients already know what to expect from different consultants in a general sense. Unfortunately the varying levels of service

rarely show up in the bottom line. With no way to make a systematic comparison of design quality clients may be forced to take the least cost option, knowing full well that the total job cost will end up being more expensive.

Defined design expectations, which are independent of individual opinion, benefit both client and consultant. If they are clearly specified, Ergo will be able to demonstrate the quality of its existing design approach. Unless design specifications are included at the time of bidding, consultant invoices will continue to be questioned despite our best efforts.

Chris

Chris Turney
Director
– Power Systems



ERGO CONSULTING LTD

106 Carlton Gore Rd, Level 1, Newmarket, Auckland
PO Box 9717, Newmarket, Auckland 1149
Ph: +64 (9) 365 9700 Fax: +64 (9) 365 9701
www.ergo.co.nz

