

CurrentAffairs

News and views from Ergo Consulting Ltd

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Newmarket Business of the Year

Ergo has been named 'BNZ Newmarket Business of the Year'. Given by the Newmarket Business Association each March, this top award recognises outstanding leadership and business success in its precinct.

Ergo was a finalist in the 'BNZ Newmarket Business of the Year' and 'People's Choice' categories, and went on to win both.

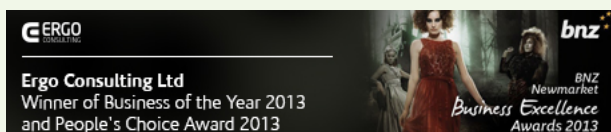
To be judged best business, Ergo was required to demonstrate positive financial results, increased shareholder value, sound management and accountability, and intangible qualities such as integrity and vision.



Aisling, Jen, Carla, Nigel, Rebecca Paterson (BNZ), Chris, Carroll, Brett and Scott celebrate Ergo's win

Ray Avery, 2010 New Zealander of the Year, was an entertaining keynote speaker at the awards ceremony. Following his lead, Chris Turney was perhaps a little too tongue in cheek in crediting the win of 'People's Choice' to his "four sons and large broadband plan".

The black tie function at Eden Park was attended by Ergo directors Chris Turney and Nigel Stevenson, Heads of Department Carla Smith, Scott Wilson, Brett Queenin and Jen Southan, and finance manager Aisling Cavanagh.



Feedback

Ergo bids for a lot of work. It can be a struggle at times to find out what the client really wants, and hence make a good guess as to scope. Sometimes we lose a bid without knowing why. This can be very discouraging, not to say expensive. Whether or not we are successful, feedback is important. It allows us to hone future offers to better serve our clients.

If clients want competitive bidding they need to train consultants in their requirements. If the scope is unclear, evaluation criteria vague, and no feedback forthcoming, then consultants will be less prepared to spend time on future bids. This reduces choice for the client. The consultant will add risk money to any bid.

Many clients are reluctant to give feedback. They either do not want to offend, or do not want to reveal the winning bid. It is not necessary to know exact figures, but orders of magnitude are helpful. So too is knowing when more scope has been offered in a particular area than intended.

Engineering is an honest profession and I believe most engineers are difficult to offend. We appreciate feedback, positive or negative, and take it on board in order to provide clients with the service they want.

Even when the work is won, honest feedback is appreciated. Things often do not go strictly to plan on a project, so should Ergo disappoint its clients in any way, or exceed expectations, we want to know.

Unfortunately positive feedback is rare. When a client tells me what a good job one of my staff has done, I tell the whole company. We love it. A good word has a powerful effect on staff attitude towards clients way out of proportion to the effort it takes to give.

Chris

Chris Turney
Director – Power Systems



Email option. Some clients have told us they prefer an email newsletter over a printed one. If this is you, simply send an email to enquiries@ergo.co.nz with 'Please Email Newsletter' in the subject line.

Best Outcomes

Ergo's philosophy is to push for the best outcome for clients. This involves considering the wider issues, and taking time to thoroughly understand client preferences and needs. In practical terms there is an emphasis on conceptual and preliminary design, and a commitment to client communication. The recent upgrade of Kerepehi Water Treatment Plant exemplifies this approach.

Kerepehi

Kerepehi was a three year project undertaken by Ergo and Harrison Grierson for Hauraki District Council. Having completed two associated projects for Council (the upgrade of both the SCADA system and pump station) Ergo was a logical choice for the water treatment upgrade.

Preliminaries

The initial design included clarifiers and sand filters in line with the existing treatment system. However other detailed designs were also prepared. Council then chose the one most appropriate to its requirements from the range of treatment options and costing models presented.

Chosen design

The chosen design included flocculation towers (previously water had gone straight into clarifiers), clarifier upgrades, a membrane plant, and UV treatment. Ergo's Control Systems team headed by Scott Wilson rolled out a complete detailed design for the plant, excluding the membrane (designed and commissioned by a third party vendor).



Dima reviews the upgraded Kerepehi site.

Design interface

"Although we didn't design the membrane it required a lot of project management on our part," comments Scott. "We wanted a seamless package. Controls and hardware had to be similar to the rest of the plant so the whole system looked and acted as one."

Major upgrade

In order to meet process requirements, Kerepehi's power supply was upsized. The distribution network, switchboards, communications infrastructure, control and fire systems, access controls and lighting were also upgraded.

Value for money

Scott takes satisfaction in the way Ergo managed the electrical side of the upgrade, with the project coming in significantly below the initial costing.

Techno Talk - Relays

Chris Turney briefly weighs up the pros and cons of digital versus electro-mechanical relays.

Electro-mechanical relays (EMRs) are very simple and not subject to the vagaries of electronics and programming. However they can be inaccurate and unreliable.

EMRs require mechanical movement of the disk to operate. Because disks can stick, and operational settings have a wide margin of error, EMRs need regular testing.

EMRs are generally only single-function – one induction disc per element. Change a curve and you must change the relay.

Digital Relays are more complex, requiring programming and auxiliary supplies to operate. However these are not big considerations as auxiliary supplies are well-monitored, and

programming is well-established and easy to audit.

A main advantage of digital relays is the multitude of protection functions available in a single relay. With just a change of setting and configuration, one electronic relay can be used for multiple applications. This greatly reduces the need for spares and multiple hardware design. It becomes economical to have a high level of supervision on every breaker.

Another key advantage of digital relays is their integration with SCADA. In a modern substation almost all the SCADA points are through the protection relays with only a small Remote Terminal Unit needed to marshal door and battery alarms etc. As the SCADA is in continual communication with the relay, any failure is immediately apparent.

New@Ergo

Joining Ergo this last quarter were **Jason Wright & So'o Fagamalo** (Control Systems) and **David Fraser** (Power Systems).

Jason has been a control systems engineer for over fifteen years. He is experienced in real time control software, project management and conceptual design. In addition to his engineering background, he has a BCom and practical experience in running his own business.

David and So'o will both graduate from The University of Auckland this year. David is returning to Ergo, having previously worked for the company over his 2011/12 summer break.



Jason Wright



So'o Fagamalo



David Fraser