



THE VALUE OF QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS

With information technology playing such an important role in every building in Australia, the benefits of installing high-quality cabling infrastructure at the initial construction level are proving to be invaluable.





THE ever-growing information technology and communications industry has now become central for how business is conducted. Unified communications, email, contact-relationship management databases, video conferencing, video security and data backup centres form the core of many business operations – and the speed and reliability of these systems can impact businesses significantly.

Although a vital element for all new building fit-outs, the importance of installing high-quality voice and data cabling is often overlooked during construction. “While the footings, piers, concrete slabs and drainage of buildings do not seem that impressive to the overall construction, having quality foundations is vital to the building’s functionality,” notes Randall

Lumbewe, Managing Director of Syndeticom Electrical and Communications. “This is the same reason why many organisations have difficulty in understanding why cabling is important to their voice and data networks.”

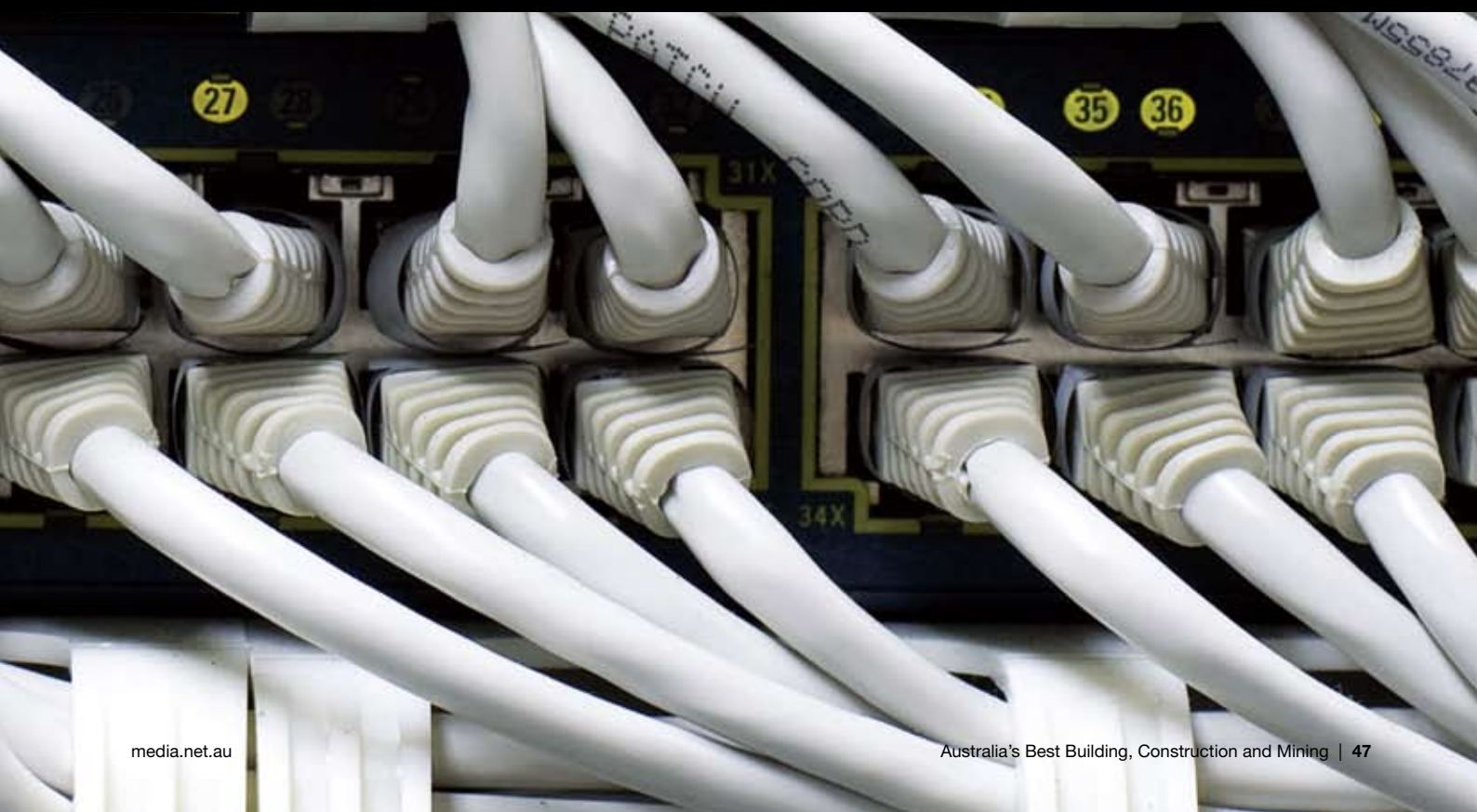
Syndeticom is an electrical and communications company founded by Randall in 1992. With over 20 years experience in the telecommunications and electronics industry, Randall spent 13 years teaching in a New South Wales TAFE, and also conducted the first Design and Engineering Structured Cabling System training course in Australia.

Recognising a niche in the market, Syndeticom began with the aim of delivering quality voice and data structured

cabling solutions. Establishing strong supplier relationships with brand-name, standards-driven cabling products has allowed Syndeticom to provide services to much of the finance and banking industries. The company is also regularly involved with commercial fit-outs for building refurbishments and new developments.

“Since 1989, when the Australian industry first implemented structured cabling, there have been several improvements to cabling performance,” relates Randall. “These improvements have been driven by the quest for increased bandwidth and greater network speeds.”

Based in Balgowlah on Sydney’s northern beaches, Syndeticom now offers a broad portfolio of services including supplying, ►





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designing, engineering and maintaining voice communications systems and networks – from small commercial fit-outs to global roll-outs of new systems.

“Cabling has always been seen as the least ‘sexy’ part of voice and data network infrastructure,” jokes Randall. “It is physical; it far outlasts any other network equipment connecting to it, and probably has the least capital and maintenance costs. The cabling is the foundation for any voice and data networks, and this infrastructure is the transport mechanism for almost all of the information that is piped around the world.”

Installing the best-quality cables during the construction stage of new buildings has proven to be a far better long-term investment for building owners. “Most existing buildings are fitted with the lowest-performing cables that run throughout the various floor levels, providing very limited bandwidth and data throughput,” explains Randall. “As businesses demand additional network bandwidth, there is an increase in demand on the network infrastructure, both incoming to the building from the telecom carriers, as well as from the basement of the building up to the tenancy floor levels. This generally necessitates each tenant

having to install their own higher-bandwidth cables, with installers then having to transition new cables from the basement up, passing through lower levels and other occupied workplaces. This can be a very slow and expensive process, all of which could have been avoided had the building’s cabling been designed and engineered correctly from the outset.”

Quality telecommunication systems are an element that many businesses would assume to be a necessity, yet they are often overlooked in favour of visually impressive but unnecessary features. “The capital cost of communications cabling represents approximately 5 to 7 per cent of a building fit-out project if done correctly,” says Randall. “It is surprising how many organisations scrimp on the cabling and compromise the performance rating, design or product in order to afford a fancy bit of carpet in the entrance foyer or some decorative artwork and lighting for the walls!”

While the initial costs of cabling can vary according to product quality, Randall mentions that the more expensive, certified communications systems and elements would always be better value in the long term. “We’ve seen clients who scrimp on

their cabling by purchasing cheap, generic-branded patch cords. The performance of these cables is generally overstated, untested or unknown, and invariably introduces network errors and slows the network down to unacceptable levels. In particular, we have had clients who have deployed these cheap cables for their servers in data centres and, without fail, they have network issues. We then have to alleviate the problems by replacing the cheap cables with branded, tested, certified and more expensive cables. So, overall, it would have been less expensive to install the higher-quality cables from the start.”

With ongoing developments and constant evolution in the technology industry, additional strains are being placed on existing communications cabling. “There is an increasing number of applications that are now being operated using internet protocol (IP), such as security cameras, access control systems, video streaming and teleconferencing systems,” relates Randall. “These new technologies, however, impose significant demands on the network and physical infrastructure such as the cabling. Poor-quality cabling or bad installation can all result in IP network

delays. For these applications, continuity and quality of service are paramount and only achieved through high-quality products, standards-based designs and good-quality installation craftsmanship.”

Ensuring that a building’s cabling and communication systems can handle the demands placed on them can often be a critical element to business success. “The applications for voice and data communications are constantly changing, and networks now need to be resilient and not be the cause for the network bottlenecks,” claims Randall. “Think how frustrating it has been when your telephone system would not let you make that phone call, or the network was not available in time for an important transaction, or the video security system or access control system was ‘off the air’.”

By installing a high-quality system from the outset, businesses are able to ensure that their ongoing costs in terms of maintenance are kept to a minimum. “Maintaining network up-time is important, as is reducing the cost of regular moves, add-ons or changes, and reducing the cost to support the physical infrastructure,” claims Randall. “All of this is possible with a professionally designed, engineered and documented cabling solution.”

Ensuring that clients always receive the most appropriate communication and cabling systems while working alongside other subcontractors during building construction is a priority that Syndeticom prides itself on. “We provide project management services for all building developments, adopting a team approach with other subcontractors on site to ensure that the process of delivering the physical infrastructure runs smoothly,” states


Randall. “Our project management also offers quality design and engineering with an eye for detail to ensure that the physical infrastructure for our customers’ voice and data networks is not just what they want, but rather what they need.”

Providing ongoing support for clients is another major focus area for Syndeticom. “We concentrate on providing responsive customer service and support for all of our installations and build strong relationships with our clients,” asserts Randall. “We are part of a global alliance of partners, so we can offer service to our clients in most parts of the world.”

Extending service beyond what is expected sets Syndeticom apart from other electrical and communication specialists. “We provide innovative solutions for our clients to improve their ability to support the cabling infrastructure and to improve the efficiency of not only their voice and data networks, but also their operational staff,” explains Randall. “Our cabling solutions come with warranties that are not only in line with the contracted defects liabilities period or the mandatory 12 months, but which we generally extend far beyond the leasing terms for clients, offering up to 20 years warranty.”

The staff at Syndeticom are recognised as being valuable resources for the company, contributing greatly to Syndeticom’s success. “Our people are trained and experienced, and we are able to boast a 100-per cent staff-retention rate for the past two years,” claims Randall. “We currently have 28 full-time employees, and our average length of staff employment is seven years. Our management staff have been selected for not only their technical expertise, but also for their ability to listen to clients and provide a customer-service experience that builds long-term relationships.”

The company also chooses to work with leading suppliers to ensure excellent quality in all products offered. As Randall notes, “Syndeticom’s supplier and vendor partnerships have been established on the basis of being industry leaders.”

As technology continues to evolve, business success will be driven by the demand for faster, more capable communication systems and infrastructure. By investing appropriately in high-quality systems and installation, companies can be assured that their networks will have the sophistication to keep up with industry advances. 

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