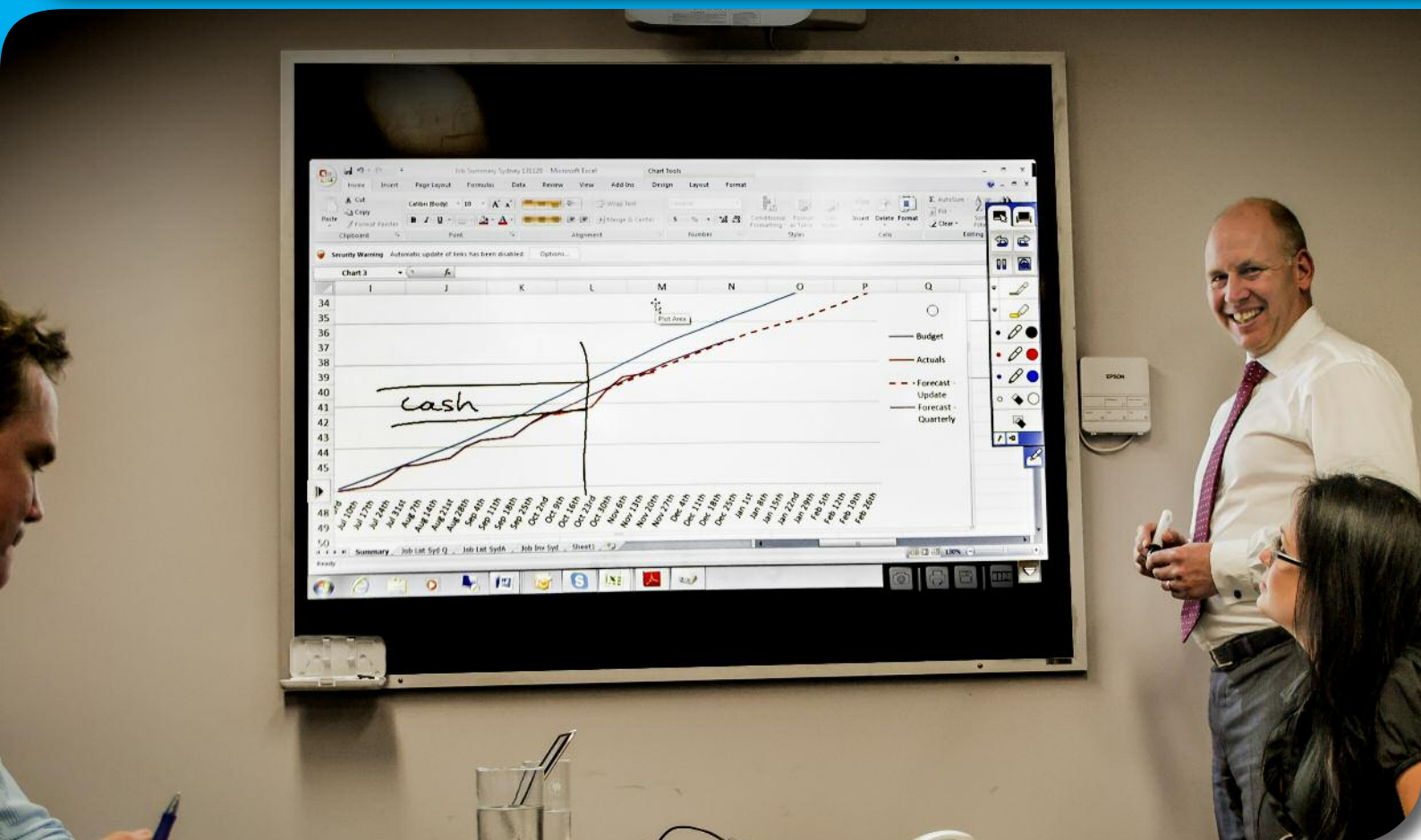


Alliance SI

Brainstorming across geographical boundaries



In the multi-discipline world of electrical, data and communications, Alliance SI is an Australian innovator. Since the company was founded at the very beginning of the PC revolution in 1977, it has carved a solid niche for itself as an undisputed leader by maintaining a position at the leading edge of new technologies and project management practices. Helping the company build an increasingly effective, collaborative environment is the Epson MeetingMate™ – the new force in meeting room collaboration and sharing.

The Situation: Collaboration above all

With operations sites located in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, Alliance SI has a major focus on teamwork at all levels of the business. In line with that, the company's executive team, which includes the three State Managers, participate in a phone conference every day and, once a week, an extended business management meeting/conference. In addition, various teams – marketing, finance and services – regularly meet to work on new initiatives; and internal staff training is given a constant emphasis.

The Challenge: The need to share and interact

According to Director of Corporate Development, Rod Cassidy, while a typical teleconference affords a certain level of communication and

collaboration, it falls short in information sharing and interactivity. "We are in a competitive industry, and giving our personnel the tools to meet, collaborate and share ideas effectively – even remotely – is absolutely critical."

The main problem Alliance SI had been facing was that using a projector and whiteboard was severely limiting. Unless all participants were sitting in the same room, everything either projected or written on the whiteboard was useless in its impact. The need was for a solution that delivered the functionality of a projector, the freedom of a whiteboard, the collaborative benefits of a network, and the ability to share and interact.

The Solution: The Epson MeetingMate

It was during a meeting with Epson that Rod was introduced to the solution – the Epson MeetingMate EB-1410Wi. The unit, which combines all four of the Alliance SI requirements, can be operated

either by an external control pad or even with dual pens. "Once I saw a demonstration of the MeetingMate, I could immediately see the benefits," Rod says. "And since it was installed the changes in the efficiencies of our meetings have been enormous."

Brainstorming made easy – and effective!

A key reason behind Alliance SI's continued success in the market is internal collaboration, particularly when it comes to general brainstorming. "We're very big on getting our people sitting down together in a room and thrashing out new ideas about services, marketing and new technologies," Rod says. "With the MeetingMate, all the sketches, notes and diagrams that are made on the screen are now saved and shared, either by printing or emailing. Nothing is lost and we now have permanent records of all the ideas that were brought up and discussed."

That situation is in stark contrast to the company's earlier days when people would be scrambling to take photos of whiteboards before everything was permanently erased. Now, it's a straightforward save (to PDF or PNG format), print and/or email – all from the MeetingMate's Whiteboard mode interface.

"The change is huge," Rod continues. "Even before people leave a meeting, they can receive a hard copy of the meeting notes. Or, as is more often the case, as soon as they get back to their desks, they will have received an email with the notes as an attachment."

Remote meeting attendance

With the MeetingMate's full networking capabilities, audio and visual content can be presented over a network, even delivered via the Internet. "The fact is that we don't even need everyone to be physically present in the room to participate in a meeting," Rod states.

"We've had people on the road logging in remotely – even with an iPad – and being able to see and hear exactly what's going on in the meeting. This is something that simply can't be achieved in a typical whiteboard and project meeting environment. It means that regardless of location, people don't miss out on meetings."

It's that same functionality that contributes to Alliance SI's executive and business meetings. Logged in to the meeting over the company's network, personnel in the Brisbane and Melbourne offices are able to participate in a meeting almost as effectively as if they were all in the one meeting room. "Everyone can see what's being presented via the MeetingMate and annotated on the screen using the interactive pen," Rod explains. "In executive meeting and training situations, this is light years ahead of what we had previously."

The initial – and immediate – benefits of the MeetingMate at Alliance SI are so great that the company is already planning to implement additional units in its Melbourne and Brisbane offices, taking collaboration to an entirely new level. Rod explains: "Our plan is to use the MeetingMate's in-built multi-site collaboration technologies to have the same presentation content running simultaneously across the three separate offices."

"Essentially, it will mean that the traditional meeting barriers that exist with traditional technologies and practices will be totally eliminated."

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