

# Express YOURSELF!

*Hi-Trans Express MD John Dow, and strategic planning manager, Brian McAvoy, tell Niki Waldegrave how Business Intelligence, a new CRM and Track 'n Trace are revolutionising the business*

HI-TRANS  
EXPRESS

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**H**i-Trans Express is a national provider of dynamic freight, warehousing and logistics management services in Australia and about to celebrate its 60th birthday.

But instead of looking forward to a relaxing future of golf and retirement, the 60-year-old family-run business is implementing a number of strategic initiatives to ensure it emerges stronger from the current resources decline.

Key to that is setting itself apart from its competitors, mainly by investing in technology, its

people, enhancing Track 'n Trace capabilities and taking Hi-Trans Express' customer service to a new level of excellence. Managing director, John Dow, says: "We've taken many strategic initiatives in the last 12 months to help improve our access to information in order to help us better manage the business.

"In July 2016, we moved into a new Adelaide depot. The facility was done to budget and on

schedule by Sagle Constructions and provides 8,000 square metres under roof. That more than doubles the space available to serve our customers and added warehousing to our Adelaide capabilities."

It's also invested significantly in its people. The business has had a stable executive leadership team for more than 10 years and has recruited key personnel over the last 12 months, including additions in Strategic Planning, Sales Management, Organisational Development, Learning Development and Depot Management.



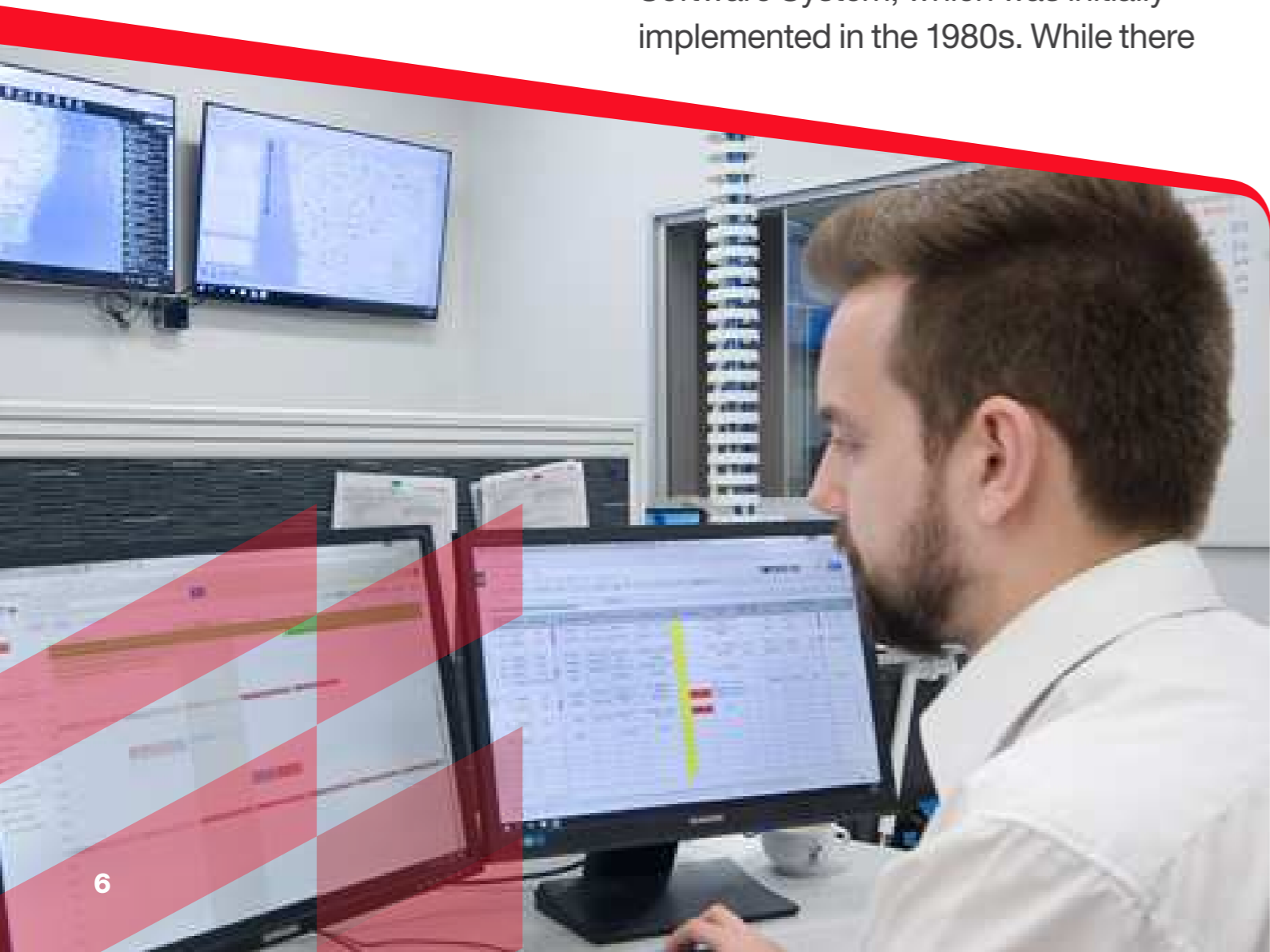


Brian McAvoy,  
Strategic Planning Manager 

“These additions will allow us to fully realise our strategic and operational expectations both today and moving forward,” adds Dow. “Our staff are now realising that they’re able to grow into bigger and better positions within the company.”

**Tech transformed**

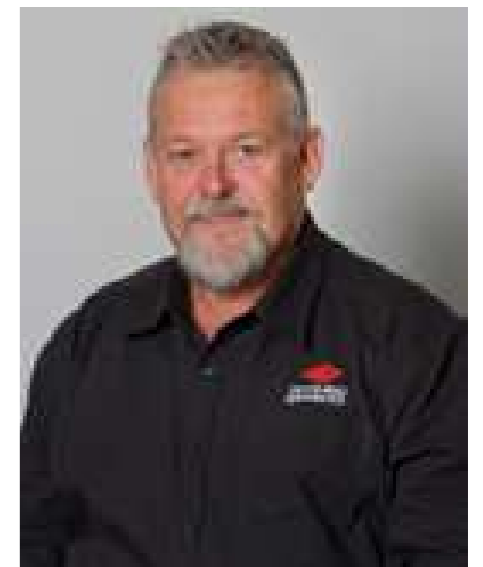
Since September 2015, Hi-Trans Express has also undergone an IT infrastructure upgrade and updated its Jaix Transport and Logistics Software System, which was initially implemented in the 1980s. While there



have been numerous updates to the system since then, the most recent update has been the largest one yet.

“Jaix is our core business system. The new upgrade keeps us flexible and gets us on a modern platform.” adds Dow, who owns the company with his brother Ross.

Jaix is a fast, flexible, fully customisable freight management system which offers GPS monitoring for the local delivery fleet, freight scanning support and provides a platform for integration to other systems, from which Hi-Trans can deliver powerful new improvements.



John Dow,  
Hi-Trans Express MD 



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“The new features allow us to respond better to our customer needs” adds Dow. “It also leverages our investments in Business Intelligence and CRM sales mobility to drive the business forward.”

When strategic planning manager, Brian McAvoy, joined Hi-Trans last year he recommended that the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system be introduced. He also championed Business Intelligence (BI) to provide real-time visibility for business performance, and says it now provides a real picture of how the business is performing day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month.




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“We’re extracting everything out of the freight management database and producing the BI visuals and reports,” McAvoy explains, “which helps our managers perform better as it’s giving them live, up-to-date information, as it happens.”

In November 2016, Hi-Trans also restructured the sales department and McAvoy says the new CRM system has given sales managers visibility to rep activity and performance.

“It’s a game-changer,” he

claims. “Because it gives our sales managers the ability to really determine if the reps are exhibiting the proper activities and getting the desired results.

“And they can respond more favourably and unfavourably depending on those results, whereas before that visibility was often elusive.

“With the CRM done properly, the sales reps see it as a productivity and results enhancement tool, not just a management tool. And



for 2017, upgrading the business' existing capabilities over the next six months by using GPS and scanning at the pallet level within its facilities to provide real-time updates as it moves through the system.

They explain how this, in turn, leverages technology to reduce paperwork and streamlines the freight tracking process for both staff and customers.

"The ultimate goal of this project is to take Hi-Trans' customer service to a new level of excellence," adds McAvoy. "We've got some good

track and trace abilities now and the next step is to enhance them."

Dow jokes about how back in the early days, when his father, company founder George, was still running the business, that "all of our consignment notes were bundled up and sent off to the accounting office, punched through ledger machines and printed out invoices that we used to fold up and send out to our customers.

"Today, we're used to the idea of technology in the parcel business, where somebody shows up and they have a scanner to



**400+**

People who work at **Hi-Trans Express**

that's where we're at, trying to drive that point home with training and mentoring and coaching. "We've given them iPads for when they're out in the field and with that visibility we can now see both what our reps are doing and their performance. It's made them more accountable, they've got more ownership and they're better able to provide timely and relevant solutions to our customers."

**Tracking traction**

Track 'n Trace is another major investment and significant focus



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“Customers now expect that same sort of technology when they’re dealing with palletised freight, less than truck load (LTL) and less than container load (LCL) freight, like we deal with.

“It will alleviate a lot of customer service, simply by them knowing at any given time where it was last scanned, and being virtually advised that it’s about to arrive at their door today; the same as a parcel.”

With the decline in the resources business, many Australian transportation businesses have suffered recently, but the duo say they’re confident the new initiatives implemented will comfortably steer them through.

“From BI, to CRM and Track ‘n Trace – these will set ourselves apart from the competition and help us be one of the leaders that emerges from this downturn stronger than we went into it,” adds Dow.

“Our strategy has been to grow via strong relationships with existing customers, leading to new opportunities and organic growth rather than acquisitions.

“In doing so, we are always open to business diversification opportunities that will logically expand our core LTL/LCL business. When the core business is exactly where we want to be, we could look to reinvest in related logistics services.” ■

