



LAN2LAN Cabling professionals keep things flowing for SPP Pumps

“You need an expert for jobs like this...”

Mark Holland,
System Support Manager,
SPP Pumps

Background

When the first oil began flowing ashore from the North Sea back in 1970, it was driven by pumps built by SPP. SPP Pumps, based in Theale in Berkshire, has been manufacturing and supplying pumps and associated equipment for more than 100 years. It is a recognised world leader in the design and production of centrifugal pumps and fluid handling systems for a wide range of industries, including fire protection and fire fighting, water supply, circulation and distribution, and drainage and irrigation.

The company has a large factory and research and development site in Coleford, in the Forest of Dean. Here, it manufactures and tests pumps for oil rigs, drainage pumping stations and a vast array of other applications. The heavy plant and machinery and finely tuned test equipment on the site mean that any IT network cabling has to be installed and routed with care, to avoid interference and data loss. It was for this reason that SPP System Support Manager, Mark Holland consulted long-time IT partners LAN2LAN for help with a major relocation project.

The Challenge

“We have converted a storage area into a new manufacturing facility,” he explains. “Demand is high for our products, with the oil producers scouring the world for new sources, and water companies battling to control flooding and improve the quality of supply.

“However, we needed to integrate the new factory into the site’s IT infrastructure, which called for a substantial investment in cabling. Building and maintaining the physical infrastructure is not a straightforward job on industrial sites, with so much metal and electrical equipment to threaten the integrity of the signal.

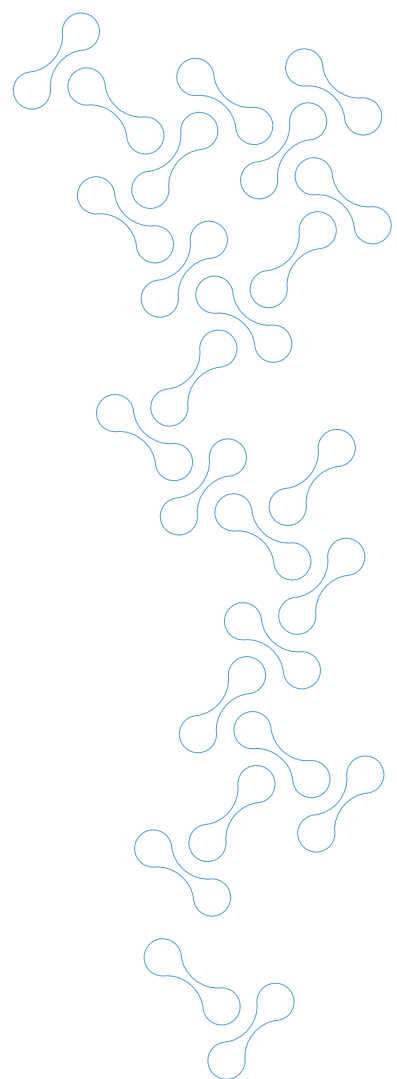
“I’ve always believed you need an expert for a job like this, so we called in LAN2LAN.”

SPP operates a communications infrastructure based on IBM® Lotus® Notes® and Domino®. In addition, the integrated manufacturing and back office systems run across the network, which extends across more than 15,000 square feet and 280 network points at the Coleford site.

“Like most companies, the business pretty much runs on the network,” says Mark Holland. “There is a direct relationship between the performance of the infrastructure, and the performance of the business. Downtime means lost productivity and delays, while slow or erratic network speeds can have a real impact on time-to-market for new developments.

“It was essential to get the fundamentals of the physical infrastructure right.”

Mark Holland,
System Support Manager,
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The Solution

A five-strong LAN2LAN cabling team, led by Project Manager Justin Lee, spent a week at the Coleford site, beginning with a site survey and the development of a cabling, project plan and patch schedule.

"We used HellermannTyton FTP shielded cable for the internal cabling, with fibre optic backbones for the longer runs between cabinets," says Justin Lee. "The site survey was crucial, because we had to plan the most cost-effective way of running the different types of cables. The stronger the shielding, the higher the cost, so the routings are planned to ensure that the shielded cable is only used where the risk of loss is highest."

The practical challenges confronting the LAN2LAN team included the need to install cabling in concrete floors, and to run cables across ceilings three storeys high. In addition, while most of the cabling was run within the building, the fibre optic backbones were run outside, where heating and ventilating ducts presented further hazards.

"We used cherry pickers and ladders for the high-level work," says Justin Lee, "taking into account all the health and safety implications of working with that kind of equipment. The team was using safety harnesses, high-visibility vests and hard hats, to comply with SPP's own health and safety requirements, and the regulations affecting high-level and hazardous working."

The Benefits

For Mark Holland, the principal benefit to the business was the timely completion of a key strategic project with minimal disruption.

"You have to have professionals doing this kind of work," he says. "I have always been satisfied with the quality of LAN2LAN's work; they are very good at what they do. You have only to look at the patch bays in the cabinets to see the attention to detail and high standards they apply."

"I have the peace of mind of knowing that a key area of risk to the integrity of my network has been professionally engineered out of the system."

LAN2LAN is an authorised provider of HellermannTyton components and the cabling is guaranteed for 25 years. SPP's infrastructure is built on a strong physical foundation.

Says Mark Holland: "Many organisations take cabling for granted; they make changes to the physical infrastructure without taking proper account of the implications for the performance of the network."

"LAN2LAN's professional approach is my assurance that the network is safe, secure and designed to deliver the speed and reliability that our business needs from end-to-end."

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