

'What IP cameras have done is allow an electronic window to open for people, and not just in terms of being able to see, watch and record'
— Mervyn Low, product manager at electronic security company Multivid

INTERNET PROTOCOL TECH IS AVAILABLE ON ANY NETWORK



ON THE ROAD AGAIN: Jo Botha's traffic engineering business is reliant on the technology offered by IP cameras

Picture: SYDNEY SESHIBEDI

CASE STUDY

Keeping your assets secure is a high priority for many business owners. **Toby Shapshak** speaks to Jo Botha, whose investment in a high-tech camera system is reaping rewards

IT'S PROBABLY safe to say Jo Botha couldn't have run his small business without the sophisticated camera system that he uses. The system proved so successful in its first installation that it has resulted in the possibility of more business opportunities. "It's opened up new doors," says Jo. "There's the possibility of eight more of these centres in Mozambique. That has never been done before."

Jo runs a business called TES Trust, which specialises in traffic monitoring, both electronic and manual. It deals, specifically, with over-load control and what's called Video Toll Auditing Systems.

One of its principal operations is monitoring these on the M4 between Pretoria and Mozambique.

TES, for traffic engineering services, employs 21 people full-time and approximately 30 part-time.

"We installed four Axis cameras at two Traffic Load Control Centres (TCC) in Maputo, Mozambique," says Jo. At each site, one camera is used to capture a side-view image of overloaded vehicles as they pass over what's called a High-Speed Wim Screener (HSWIM).

The other camera operates at a static scale, enabling the scale master to read number plates and match the image with the one received

from the HSWIM.

"The biggest challenge that we faced was to get a high-resolution, single-frame image instantaneously. We also needed a high frame-per-second rate to capture vehicles with less than a two-minute following distance in multiple lanes," says Jo. "Off site back-up is possible, and useful."

Jo says using the cameras has been helpful to TES's business.

"We use an Ethernet and fibre backbone, and being able to send a single frame and continuous video to a source made the whole methodology behind the TCC System possible."

Jo says the Axis cameras cost

about R14 000 each, while the only other competitor's cameras cost R22 000 each.

"Rands and cents count, and we wouldn't have made it," he says, if his company couldn't do it within the budget. "This is a new concept. We were looking for what the cameras can do."

Jo says although TES used older, analogue cameras, they could not satisfy the need for this particular application. The newer IP cameras can also work at night. "Due to the fact that the TCC stations have no street lights, we had to incorporate infrared lights.

The results have been amazing, and

matching can be done at night as well. If this was not possible we would have lost the use and effectiveness of the system at night."

The camera system has enabled effectiveness in over-load control to be improved drastically.

"It enables our client, TRAC, to monitor and audit events and occurrences."

Using this new technology has made it easier for TES to run its business.

"I believe it has opened new business opportunities, and with a basic 'African Solution', these systems can be rolled out and maintained with ease. Hopefully more will follow."

