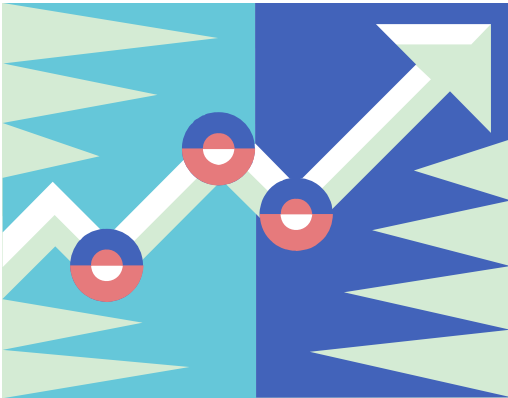


SUCCESS IN THE SOUTHEAST May 2007



Recent reports from Electrical Contractors and Communications Contractors leave little doubt that the IBS (Integrated Building Systems), Telephone Systems, and Datacom Structured Cabling Systems are “**ON FIRE**”. Despite the plague of rising copper cable costs, installations of Cat 5e and Cat 6 datacom copper cable remain healthy and a significant revenue stream for these contractors. Demand for more fiber to the desk or work zone is a side effect of the bleak picture on copper costs. Locations with known long-life facilities are comparing the copper versus fiber life cycle costs and fiber is more often the winner.

Mike Rice, Cabling Project Manager for Communication Planning Corporation (Jacksonville, FL) said there some new aspects to their project work that are more important than expected. “First of all, the copper cable has become the focus of jobsite thieves. Recently a major electrical contractor in North Florida reported a copper cable theft of more than \$20,000. Now their jobsite trailers have security cameras. The problem has generated jokes like ‘We are hiring a tail gunner for the cable delivery truck.’ We think this security issue will not go away anytime soon.”

Scot Hancock, Sr.Telephone Technician for CPC www.communicationplanning.com added the importance of a well-planned infrastructure, “We know that a smart cabling system is one of the most important barriers to downstream costs for MACs (Moves, Additions, &Changes) and repairs.” He added the properly documented infrastructure that is fully labeled cuts many hours of hunting for the problem. “All our trucks carry the DYMO Rhino labelers and a Fluke Networks DTX cable analyzer, and we save the test records for the customers. We have more than ample data to show how much cost is eliminated by ‘doing it the right way’. The craft intensive installation requirement for Cat 6 copper is too delicate to go it alone. We are using the Beast Cabling System to insure the cable installs are delivering maximum performance with minimum loss due to cable stress during the installation. We have used this system for the past two years and it helps the project flow smoothly.” Michael Shannahan, VP-Operations said stay focused on safety and

code compliance as well, like fire stops. “The job must be performed in a proper and professional manner to insure the safety of the installers and the customer.” We use Unique Fire Stop Products (<http://www.uniquefirestop.com/>) that we get through CSC (www.gocsc.com). Never cut corners on safety. The only real problem associated with this growth in business is lack of well-trained technicians to fill the expanding job market. We are always looking for cabling and telephone technicians.”

Mike Heisler of CSC told us the shortage of trained technicians is being felt all over the Southeast. We checked with Barry Simons (ADS Telecom), Brian Chancey (Area Communications), Steve Strumlauf (AIC – American International Communications), and Michael Lohr (Ensource.net). All of these companies have reported outstanding business growth, but a real shortage in trained technicians to meet their increased needs. However, we found the fiber optic installer technician resource growing as more talent passes through the outstanding training programs of the Light Brigade www.lightbrigade.com, the Fiber Optic Association www.thefoa.org, and BICSI www.bicsi.org. Will fiber eventually replace copper as the primary type of cabling? There will be many factors driving the outcome, but perhaps the ever-increasing appetite for bandwidth will give fiber optics the edge.

Abandoned Cable Removal services seems to be more stimulated by the “recycled copper” dollars than the NEC (National Electrical Code). There are many important issues before the National Fire Protection Association in this code cycle and upcoming cycles. You can LEAD, FOLLOW, or GET OUT OF THE WAY, but you must join the NFPA www.nfpa.org, if want to be part of the process. We recommend it highly.