

CEL Electric Customer Spotlight



The electrical contracting company relies on Dropbox Business to connect headquarters with field supervisors in some of Canada's most remote locations.



Key Results



Increased collaboration between supervisors and headquarters



Seamless external sharing of large drawings



Unlimited data recovery over valuable assets

“If I go on site, my day is gone. I have to fly out, drive to a remote location, have meetings, and come back. It costs us quite a bit. With Dropbox Business, I can support field supervisors from headquarters instead of making the trip.”



Mark Karr, Project Manager, CEL Electric

THE CHALLENGE

Suffering a shock to the system

With an economy largely driven by mining, manufacturing, and agriculture, the Canadian province of Saskatchewan relies on electrical contracting firms like CEL Electric to power key production facilities. Since its founding in 1979, CEL has steadily grown, opening six offices across Canada. But as the company scaled, existing tools limited employees' ability to easily share information with each other and with customers. When emailing drawings to building owners, employees were forced to break up large PDF files into smaller pieces to work around attachment limitations. “The steps were cumbersome and data got lost,” says Mark Karr, Project Manager. Worse yet, many employees had to resort

to sending CDs, thumb drives, or stacks of paper drawings and contracts by courier—a slow and costly process. The final straw came in 2014, when lightning struck a CEL server in Saskatoon, erasing six month's worth of work, says Shaun Unger, VP of Corporate Affairs. “It was our wake-up call to make a change,” Unger says.

CEL decided to move to the cloud, choosing Dropbox Business because it made it easy to share files with external partners. The fact that many CEL employees already had personal Dropbox accounts made the decision a no-brainer. “Adoption becomes so much easier since people were already comfortable with the system,” Unger says. “Dropbox was by far the most efficient way to launch projects.”



THE SOLUTION

Powering a better way to work together

Dropbox Business has transformed the entire way CEL manages jobs, from initial bid to the design phase to the ultimate construction of power generators, water treatment plants, and grain bins, to name a few projects. To keep this complex process as tidy as possible, CEL sets up subfolders for each project to organize key assets like drawings, change orders, pricing quotes, and permits. “Now everyone always knows where everything is,” Karr says. “I don’t carry around thumb drives on my keychain anymore.” Engineering and design teams can collaborate on massive AutoCAD designs, as employees can access the latest files on Dropbox, leading to quicker turnaround times on projects. If job scopes change, supervisors in the field can now pull up the files they need on their phones, making it easy to collaborate with CEL offices in real time. The camera upload feature on Dropbox means photographs of new wirings or power sources at jobsites are shared nearly instantly with HQ. “As soon as a supervisor takes a picture, I can see what we’re talking about,” says Karr.

When working from remote locations, employees can still access the files they need as Dropbox Business works in low-bandwidth situations. “We could see changes coming in even with an unstable connection out by Hudson Bay,” Karr

says. CEL employees no longer waste time working on outdated documents, as the Dropbox badge lets users know who else is in a file. The IT department sleeps easier now, too, knowing sensitive company information is truly safe. The account transfer feature lets admins move files to another employee’s account if someone leaves the company. And link expirations restrict access to bids or design concepts after a certain date.

THE RESULTS

Clicking links instead of boarding flights

Dropbox Business has brought CEL reliable data backup—the company’s most pressing need following the lightning strike. But CEL says the service has been a boon in other areas, too. Unlimited version recovery has come in handy, enabling one employee to retrieve \$5,000 worth of drawings and spreadsheets that had been accidentally deleted. But the biggest impact has come from increased efficiency and productivity. “With Dropbox Business, I can support our field supervisors from headquarters instead of making the trip,” says Karr. “If I go on site, I have to fly out, drive to a remote location, have meetings, and come back. It costs us quite a bit.” In the field, Dropbox Business helps ensure everyone stays up to date. “Everything is centralized, no matter where our team is based,” Unger says. “There’s no doubt it makes us all more productive.”

Use case

How Dropbox Business helps

Collaboration	On-site supervisors and headquarters collaborate even in remote locations through shared folders on mobile devices.
Sharing	Shared links have allowed employees to send large drawings to customers during the bid and design process.
Backup	Unlimited version recovery provides CEL with the peace of mind that its valuable work will remain accessible.

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Shaun Unger, VP of Corporate Affairs, CEL Electric

