

RIDING TO PLUNKET'S RESCUE WITH TECHNOLOGY THAT WORKS.

How Spark and Samsung delivered a much-needed solution for Plunket's nurses.



Plunket, New Zealand's universal care organisation for children under five, relies heavily on mobile technology to support nurses on their home visits.

Their previous solution had proven unreliable and hard to work with. Replacement with Samsung Galaxy Book and Tab Pro S tablets, along with J5 Prime, A5 and A7 smartphones, has been a revelation. With reliable connectivity and exceptional ease of use, Plunket's frontline staff feel confident in their use of the technology and are able to concentrate on supporting New Zealand families and whānau. Plunket also thoroughly appreciates the genuine partnership shown by Samsung and service provider Spark.

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PLUNKET'S PARTICULAR NEEDS

Plunket is so much a part of what it means to be a Kiwi that it's easy to take for granted. Yet this not-for-profit organisation, founded 110 years ago, plays a crucial role in the health and well-being of New Zealand children, families and whānau. The support Plunket provides is universal, comprehensive and available to all, regardless of location or ability to pay. This involves a lot of home visits by Plunket nurses, and that places particular demands on the technology they use.

"What we were using before was proving to be a bit obsolete," says Amanda Malu, Plunket's Chief Executive. "They were simply not robust enough for staff to carry around out in the field. There were supply issues and failures, and doing what the nurses do they absolutely need something reliable."

Amanda is talking about Plunket's previous set-up for nurses: a tablet and a smartphone, used not just as a communication device but also as a health and safety device. Andy Miller, Plunket's ICT Operations Manager, describes some of the limitations they encountered: "with the phones, the staff struggled to read emails properly, there were issues with documentation, with dropping calls and answering calls. It was not proving to be a robust solution and they were not popular." A sentiment echoed by Jayne Burch, Nursing Informatics Training and Development Consultant at Plunket. "Staff members were saying, 'if we're using a smartphone, could it at least be smart?' Even the basics were a struggle. The nurses need a solution that's easy to use and reliable when they're out in people's homes."

PRESSURE ON NURSES

Temperamental phones were only part of Plunket's technology woes. The specified tablets performed poorly on internet connectivity, stability and reliability, and had a small screen. This meant nurses had problems linking to and showing important demonstration videos. It also put nurses under unnecessary pressure, as they struggled to complete essential documentation during their working day, having to catch up after hours. Things weren't any better from an ICT perspective, either, with Andy Miller describing their management as 'a struggle'.

What was clearly required was a solution that was robust, reliable and easy to use: something nurses could depend on and that would help them in both their clinical role and their administrative duties. Andy is relatively new to Plunket, joining just over a year ago, and his arrival coincided with the pressing need to review the technology used by the nurses. "The tablet vendor's technology roadmap was changing, and we were forced to look quickly for a technology solution," he says. "Initially, we were hoping to find something that met at least 80% of our requirements. And that included light weight, portability and durability, as well as all the technical aspects."

NEW OPPORTUNITY

There are some particular complications that come with procurement for an organisation like Plunket. "It has an interesting duality," as Amanda describes it. "On the one hand we're a charity that relies heavily on donations and sponsorship. On the other we are an 80 million-dollar-a-year business with funding from the government and responsibility for running the nation's well child service. While there is a wonderful community aspect, we have to be a well-run organisation." Andy points out another side to Plunket's financial responsibility. "What keeps me up at night is, if I invest a dollar am I investing it in the right place to ultimately help families and whānau?"

A change in the existing vendor's roadmap provided an opportunity to review requirements and find an alternative that addressed Plunket's technology issues while being a future focused solution.

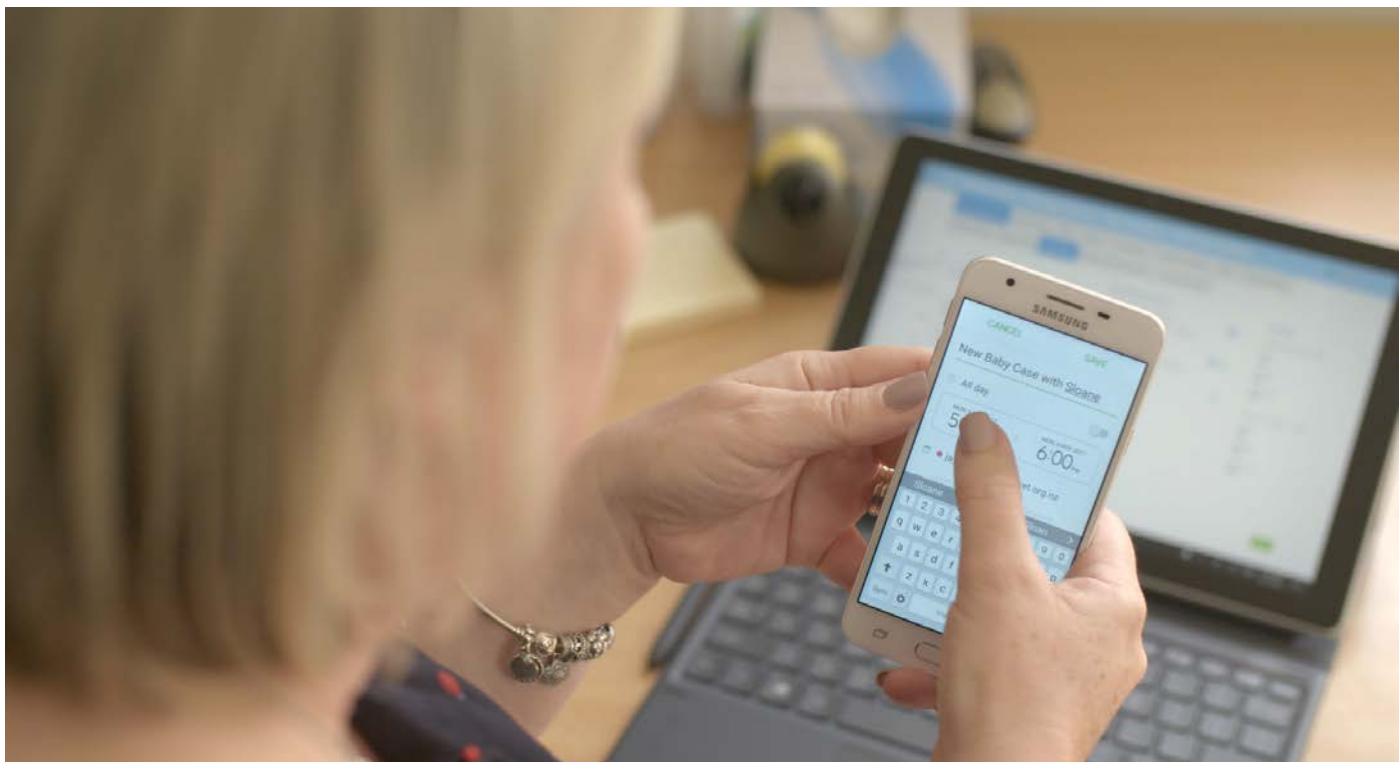
ARRIVING AT THE BRIEF

None of the requirements on Plunket's list looks that demanding on its own. But they add up. The solutions provided had to be reliable, durable, stable, light, portable and intuitive to use. It had to offer Windows compatibility to run the Heath Record App and the devices had to be compatible with one another. It needed internet connectivity that could be relied upon and a display that worked in a typical home context. And, with 25 years' experience in paediatric nursing, Jayne added another perspective. "You're actually talking about a clinical device. We're taking these things into the family home and we have strict infection control policies. Keyboards trap dirt and we wanted something that could be wiped clean."

Previous experience had shown that promises about a product's performance didn't always prove true out on the field. So any replacement had to deliver where it counts: in people's homes, even in rural or remote areas.



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THE SOLUTION

Plunket formed a strong partnership with Spark and Samsung to find a bespoke, fit-for-purpose solution that would really meet the organisation's needs. They started by giving Amanda and other nurses a Windows-based Samsung tablet to test, which proved a hit. Then the conversation extended to a possible business solution. For Andy, introducing new mobile device management (MDM) and moving Plunket's core infrastructure to Spark meant the mobile platform needed to be robust and secure. "The Samsung KNOX solution gave us an extra layer of security, we can now track our phones and even remotely wipe them if they're lost or stolen". For the nurses, however, the real change showed up in their hands. "They like the look, they like the screen size, they're easy to type on, and secure and stable," reports Jayne, about the tablets now being used in the field. "And I can't say enough about the smartphones: they're marvellous, the nurses absolutely love them. There's not one person who doesn't." That enthusiasm is born out by Andy's experience. "No complaints! Honestly, we've rolled out hundreds of phones and the only calls I've had have been forgotten PIN numbers. They're familiar to many and easy to use. The quality, the service, everything is better.

A GENUINE PARTNERSHIP

Plunket will have 410 Galaxy Books in use, offering a state-of-the-art, 2-in-1 solution, and 400 Tab Pro S tablets, along with nearly 1,400 Samsung smartphones. It's a solution covering the needs of everyone from senior management and administrative staff to the nurses on their house calls. And while the endorsement from frontline staff has been gratifying, Andy and Amanda have something else they value. "Personally, it has given me faith that there are vendors out there who are not just transactional," says Andy. "They really want to be in a partnership and help us. Dealing with Samsung and Spark has been an eye-opener." Amanda agrees, "It feels like a genuine partnership. They heard and understood our needs in terms of what technology had to do for us. They really came to the party to meet our technology requirements and budget constraints, yet still managed to tailor-make a solution for us, and ultimately for the families. That's really not just a supplier relationship, is it?".

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