

Business in the great outdoors



PAULA MARTIN & RON LAUGHLIN
NEW ZEALAND JEWELLERY

FACT FILE

Company Background

- ❖ Sterling silver jewellery inspired by traditional New Zealand designs.
- ❖ Displayed and sold by 40 galleries in the South Island and 25 stores in the North Island plus two in Australia, one in France and one in London.
- ❖ www.nzjewellery.co.nz
- ❖ www.ronlaughlin.net

Challenge

- ❖ Maintain New Zealand Jewellery website and receive customers orders while on the road and provide travel and outdoor articles for New Zealand and international magazines.

Solution

- ❖ Mobile Broadband data card connected to Telecom's Mobile Broadband network.

“We’re always meeting people who say, ‘I wish I could do what you have done’, but never actually follow through and do it,” says Ron Laughlin.



WITH THIS TECHNOLOGY I CAN CHECK AND PROVISION CUSTOMER ORDERS AND THEN STEP OUTSIDE FOR SOME TROUT FISHING.

Ron and his wife Paula Martin decided last year to swap their 'normal' working life for a life of freedom in a seven metre bus – kitted not only with all the necessities of a 'home away from home' but those of a 'business away from home' as well.

Ron and Paula both traded successful jobs in Wellington's retail scene for this nomadic lifestyle and currently maintain several websites – Paula's jewellery business New Zealand Jewellery and Ron's writing business – from their travelling office.

Since September 2004, they have made six circumnavigations of the South Island and spent three months in the North Island, visiting galleries where Paula's jewellery is displayed and sold and gathering photos and information for Ron's creative writing.

Freedom to roam

Achieving this remarkable work-life balance has been made possible with the help of Telecom's Mobile Broadband network and the latest Mobile Broadband data card.

Paula's designs are much sought-after overseas. There is demand from the United States and the United Kingdom but orders have also come from as far away as the Arctic Circle. The New Zealand Jewellery website is a major source of sales, supplementing those made through local galleries.

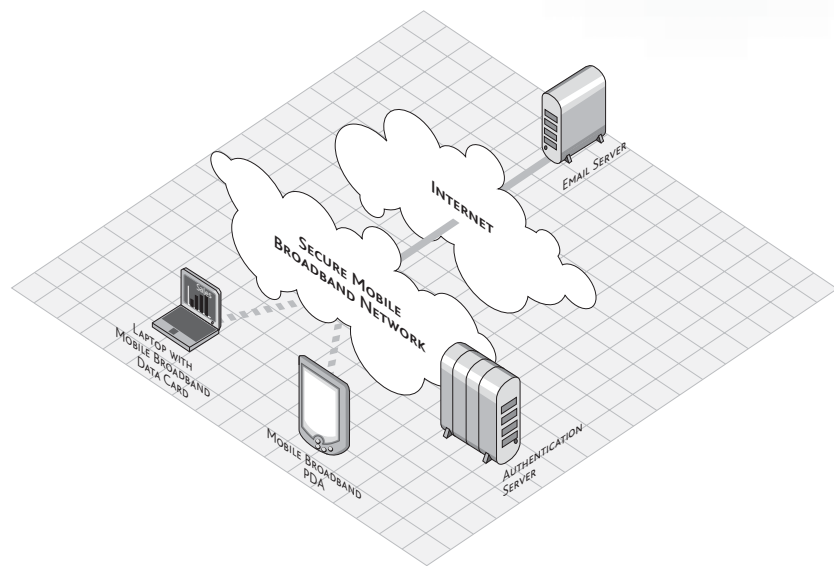
Ron and Paula use Mobile Broadband to update the website and receive email orders from international customers. They simply plug the data card into their laptop to instantly access the Internet and their emails.

"We roam all over the South Island but we're seldom out of touch," Mr Laughlin says.

Being more responsive

"Our business is based around being responsive to our customers. The website means we're effectively open 24/7 and with Mobile Broadband we can take orders, package the jewellery and post it to our customers from the nearest town almost immediately.

"Far from being sceptical of our ability to get the job done while we're roaming about, our customers and retail outlets have been quite



envious of how we can do what we love without sacrificing business success and they appreciate the personal service we are able to provide."

Ron and Paula say their first Telecom data card gave them the impetus they needed to act on their desire to see more of the country.

"We got hold of a Telecom mobile data card and bought the bus soon after. We've recently upgraded to a Mobile Broadband data card, giving us even faster data speeds, which are particularly useful for uploading new, data-intensive images onto the website.

"We've seldom had a problem with coverage and the speeds stay remarkably consistent, regardless of where we are in the South Island."

Far from toning down their business to preserve their lifestyle, Ron and Paula are planning to locate additional galleries in the North Island to display the jewellery.

Room for growth

"We deal with 40 galleries in the South Island and 25 in the North Island at the moment, but we'd like to expand. We'd never want the

business to limit our lifestyle but we think there's room for a bit more growth," Mr Laughlin says.

"I also do marketing and promotion for several companies, write a regular column for the New Zealand Motor Home Association and a weekly travelogue 'On the Road' for New Zealand Tourism Online, and I'm working on two guide books for the South Island – none of which I could do without getting out into the outdoors myself. With Mobile Broadband, I can write about our experiences and send the articles off to the publisher without having to break the journey.

"We run two successful businesses without being stuck in an office and we enjoy every minute of it. With this technology I can check and provision customer orders and then step outside for some trout fishing.

"We can't see ourselves ever going back to the daily grind."