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CONSTRUCTECH

Constructech magazine is the construction industry advocate focused on the technology needs of the construction professional dedicated to driving technology initiatives forward.

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Enabling High Performance Construction

Eliminate the high-wire act by using the right technology

Enabling High-Performance Construction

When it comes to managing technology, would you classify your company as being high performance or high wire? While many firms would like to believe they are achieving a level of high performance, in many cases these companies feel more like they are running a high-wire act instead, trying to strike a delicate balance of efficiency and cost.

This idea of high performance is one recently examined by Accenture, www.accenture.com, New York, N.Y., when the market research and consulting firm spoke out about turning your IT department into one that is a "high-performing IT department." Accenture characterized these firms as those that hit the ground running following the recent economic downturn. Whereas some companies simply stayed put with their IT efforts during the downturn, those defined as being of "high performance" instead used the time to drive more business value from IT, seeing technology as being a growth engine.

While the study done by Accenture was not construction-specific, many of the themes hold true for this industry and what it takes to survive. For example, firms considered to be "high performing" by Accenture exhibited an ability to successfully retire legacy systems and embrace new technologies; Web-enable interactions with customers and suppliers; recognize the strategic role IT plays in increasing customer satisfaction; measure benefits realized from IT initiatives; and develop and implement new initiatives, rather than maintaining existing ones.

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There is a definite correlation between the themes cited by Accenture and those

exhibited today by those construction companies considered to be tech-savvy. A look at the ways in which this industry has progressed in recent years shows many companies are definitely on the road to high performance.

Take the trend of retiring legacy systems and embracing new technologies as one example. In some ways this has become more of a common theme as companies begin to realize the limitations under which they are working by using older, outdated systems. Couple this with software providers working with newer technologies, including Microsoft .NET or SQL Server, to name a few, and what you have is a market realizing what a difference technology can make in the long run. Quite frankly, this leaves some software vendors out in the cold as they

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Operational Efficiency


 Work Orders, Field Service, Equipment and Cost Management Solutions

have not evolved their systems in order to keep up with the change in requirements.



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Also, the ability to Web-enable interactions with customers and

suppliers is another theme that resonates well in construction. While it is true this has been happening in construction for some time now, given the new advancements in collaborative technologies, collaborative efforts are being taken to heights never before seen in this market.

Overall, the theme, cited by Accenture, of implementing new initiatives rather than simply maintaining existing ones is one to examine closely in construction. Recent data compiled by *Constructech* reveals roughly 41% of construction companies believe there is real value in expending IT efforts in both. In other words, these firms are both investing in new technology initiatives as well as maintaining current ones.

Quite simply, that last theme is one that needs to continue in order for construction companies to advance technology initiatives going forward. While investing in new technology is a smart strategy, if done with due diligence, the ability to continually refine the systems and services already in place is what will ensure you are making the most of your IT investment.

When judging this year's nominees for Top Products, *Constructech* editors used a more discerning eye than ever before. Products that we believed did not display a certain level of enhancement to meet the changing needs of the market simply did not make the cut this year. Many companies nominated products in which very little enhancements were made.

The bar for construction technology has been raised. This year's Top Products winners exhibit the ability to match these heightened expectations, and in the process take your firm to a level of higher performance.

Collaboration



www.bentley.com/navigator
Exton, Pa.

Navigator V8i

Keeping all the project participants informed and connected across the entire project can be a tall task. However, technology can help team members collaborate, which ultimately reduces rework and speeds up processes. Bentley's Navigator V8i can help project teams working on infrastructure projects review and analyze project information. With Bentley Navigator, geographically distributed teams can manage and publish content, review designs, and manage the asset lifecycle. This tool allows construction organizations to save time when accessing project information and reduce risk by using one source for information. While Bentley's roots are in modeling software, the Constructech editors like how the company continually expands its footprint, becoming a powerful source for collaboration technology in construction.

Enterprise



www.cmic.ca
Toronto, Ont.

CMiC

CMiC Open Enterprise v10 is so fresh that it is still being rolled out to customers at the time of publication. It is rare for a product so new to be named to the list of Top Products, but if delivered as promised it could up the ante for larger ERP systems in construction. It will offer a single, scalable database and the ability to link third-party apps to the enterprise (including BIM and field modules). Constructech likes the module that will allow less technical users to create and modify screens based on business needs. Early adopters hold the promise for ensuring this product delivers as promised, and could set the stage for added functionality.

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us-MindMatters.com/Project_Mgmt

Estimating

www.conest.com
Manchester, N.H.

IntelliBid

Electrical and datacom contractors looking for an intelligent estimating program should give IntelliBid a try. The software features Smart System Technology, which includes built-in NEC tables. This is vital because it allows for precise material installations based on NEC requirements, and is intelligent enough to correct an installation error with its Smart Substitution feature. The intelligence built into IntelliBid even automatically adjusts labor for an installation based on the degree of difficulty for the job. Constructech editors like the level of intelligence that ConEst builds into the IntelliBid product. This comes from years of industry experience, which ConEst obviously has applied to building its product line overall.

Content Management

www.construction-imaging.com
Manchester, N.H.

Content manager

Documentation is more than just paper records in a filing cabinet. On a construction project, documentation includes electronic files, voice notes, videos, Web content, and emails, among others. With the amount of data that exists on a job today, construction companies need a tool to manage all this content. Construction Imaging's Content Manager is an enterprise platform that leverages workflow, provides search, centralizes storage, and manages data. The Constructech editors like that Content Manager integrates with Microsoft Office, Outlook, SharePoint, and Windows File Share, as well as other construction-specific ERP and project-management systems. With its focus on the construction industry, Construction Imaging's solution helps companies manage the full information life cycle.

Enterprise

www.corecon.com
Huntington Beach, Calif

Corecon v7

Some technology providers continue to invest in redeveloping core software products. Corecon Technologies is one example of a company that has continued to enhance its product offerings. Corecon V7 is Web-based software that allows small-to-mid-sized general contractors and subcontractors to manage a multitude of processes including estimating, project management, job costing, and collaboration. The Constructech editors like that the technology provider offers its product on a range of devices and operating systems. Near the end of last year the company announced Corecon Mobile, which allows construction companies to use Corecon V7 on a number of smartphone and tablet devices such as Apple's iPad and RIM's BlackBerry, among others. For commercial contractors another update is the enhanced scheduling module, which can allow teams to more easily collaborate about schedules.

Project Management**FreightTrain**

Healthcare construction is one segment of the industry that may soon begin to see growth in today's economy. For contractors that are building new and renovation



www.freighttrain.com
Los Angeles, Calif

healthcare projects, technology systems can help them gain a competitive advantage. FreightTrain from HTS (Healthcare Technical Services), is a Web-based construction management product that integrates control process for owners, architects, and general contractors performing construction management, commissioning, and transition planning. The Constructech editors like that the product provides online construction management with customized analytics and metric tools. FreightTrain uses Visual Fragnets, which are room-based reports that provide a color-coded view of construction status. FreightTrain improves scheduling of subcontractors and inspections, while facilitating communication and monitoring performance trends. This helps to speed up the delivery of construction tasks on healthcare projects.

Service



www.jonas-construction.com
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Jonas Paperless Service Management

Service divisions of construction organizations are seeing a good portion of the work these days. Jonas Software provides a solution that can help increase productivity and improve customer satisfaction in service departments. The Jonas Paperless Service Management product has core modules that form an integrated solution. Jonas eService allows service technicians to review work orders, equipment lists, and outstanding accounts payable. The Jonas Dispatch system can manage the scheduling of work orders and technicians. The Constructech editors like the fact Jonas continues to advance Jonas Mobile technology in order to help technicians manage work orders in the field. Given Jonas' continued product advancements and approach to educating and opening discussions in the market, this product will likely continue to be a good option for contractors in the year to come.

Enterprise



www.maxwellsystems.com
King of Prussia, Pa.

ProContractorMX

Sometimes it is what is underneath that counts. Early last year Maxwell Systems came to market with a new product designed to allow the construction industry to manage business operations. ProContractorMX is built on the Microsoft .NET platform and SQL Server. The complete product is an 'end-to-end' solution that allows construction companies to manage everything from takeoffs and estimating to job cost/accounting to project management. The solution also has dashboards that offer detailed reports and analysis of construction projects. The Constructech editors like what Maxwell has done 'under the hood.' By building an entirely new solution based on the latest Microsoft technologies, this solution offers a new level of flexibility that will allow construction companies to scale the software as market conditions change and business begins to grow again.

Project Management



Prolog

With a greater focus on project control and transparency, more companies are using program and project-management technologies today. Meridian Systems' Prolog allows project-based organizations to manage construction, real estate, and other infrastructure projects,

www.meridiansystems.com
Folsom, Calif.

helping to reduce project risk, control costs, and provide transparency to all of the stakeholders involved in a construction project. The Constructech editors like Meridian's focus on Web services technology, which allows Prolog users to choose how they would like to access their project data. For example, a project executive can view reports via Microsoft Outlook while a project superintendent can view the data in Microsoft Excel. The company says it has plans for the year ahead to further leverage Web services for the purposes of integration and interoperability of Prolog with other technology solutions.

Project Management



www.oncenter.com
The Woodlands, Texas

Digital Production Control

Today more than ever, not knowing your labor costs can be a recipe for disaster. Digital Production Control takes an innovative approach to the process and has created a project-tracking program that integrates the estimating and takeoff process. Using this product, companies can digitally track labor production directly from the field to the office. Constructech applauds the usability built into the product, such as its color-coded spreadsheet that calls to attention labor production problems in realtime. This graphical alert helps spot potential setbacks of profit losses right away; hopefully helping them avoid costly overruns. Released in 2008, Digital Production Control has made quite an impact on controlling costs in construction.

Digital Takeoff



www.oncenter.com
The Woodlands, Texas

On-Screen Takeoff

In many ways, On Center's On-Screen Takeoff product has become synonymous with the digital-takeoff process in construction. Allowing estimators to view plans, PDFs, and CAD files onscreen, the product helps create a paperless takeoffs process. The adoption rate of digital-takeoff technology continues to grow and to many contractors, On-Screen Takeoff is the benchmark product. The latest update adds an overlay feature, which includes automatic resizing and aligning of overlay images, the ability to rotate overlay images independent of the base image, and a new overlay image de-skew function. The new enhancements just keep coming to a product that is a critical part of the estimating process in construction today.

Bidding



www.oncenter.com
The Woodlands, Texas

Quick Bid

As On Center Software's flagship product, Quick Bid is a product that continues to get more and more useful in the construction industry each year. Let's talk about its time-saving ability; providing a digital alternative to using spreadsheets, the Quick Bid product automates bidding functions that are performed manually. This functionality alone can save contractors greatly in the current market conditions. Constructech likes the way construction companies can use the product in order to quickly adjust existing bids, and generate new bids using an online database and eQuote for material pricing and vendor quotes. The latest version of Quick Bid includes different accounting exports to ensure the efficiency created in this product carries over to financials too.

Project Management

www.projectmates.com/quickdemo
Dallas, Texas

Projectmates

Systemates' Projectmates has been serving the capital program management needs of the construction industry for more than 10 years with major upgrades nearly every quarter. The Web-based construction project management solution has helped countless construction programs improve project execution and reduce risks, while better controlling costs and budgets. The company continually adds rich functionality and expands program accessibility through a variety of browsers and mobile devices. Constructech editors are particularly impressed with the way in which Projectmates remains strong in the area of customer service and support. Some of the most prominent capital project programs in the construction industry give the company high marks on its level of service, quick implementation, and willingness to respond to needs in a fast and efficient manner. Product and service make for a complete solution to the construction market.

Enterprise

www.viewpointcs.com
Portland, Ore.

Viewpoint V6 Software

Viewpoint V6 Software is an enterprise solution integrating accounting, human resources, project management, document management, and operations. Among the enhancements to the product is a preconstruction module, which will allow construction companies to use technology at the very early stages of a project. This module allows users to identify the available pool of qualified subcontractors. With the subcontractor prequalification form, companies can collect information including general data, legal and financial, and subcontractor capabilities. Companies can also use advanced features in Viewpoint V6 Software such as workflow and business intelligence with prebuilt customizable templates. The product is built on the Microsoft .NET Framework and uses the SQL Server database. Viewpoint Connects is a Web portal with integration to V6 accounting, project management, human resources, and preconstruction, enabling collaboration with all project stakeholders.

Job Cost

www.wennsoft.com
New Berlin, Wis.

Job Cost

Built on the belief that accurate job cost numbers come from being truly in tune with your company's financials, WennSoft has created one of the most powerful systems in the market. Job Cost helps project managers manage labor, materials, equipment, and subcontractors, among other data, by combining project-management capabilities with the abilities of Microsoft Dynamics. Constructech editors like the way WennSoft develops products that don't simply hand off pieces of information between modules, but rather are woven right into the product itself: this is the true meaning of integration. Job Cost, a flagship product of WennSoft's, continues to gain momentum across multiple segments of the market due to the company's steadfast commitment to matching functionality with customer needs.



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