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Streamlining Bids and Takeoffs

April 13, 2011

The rising costs associated with running a construction business in today's marketplace have encouraged many contractors to adopt technology that automates processes. Software that automates the bidding and estimating process, for instance, can be extremely cost-effective by reducing redundancy and increasing operational efficiency.

For electrical contractors, one such solution to consider comes from Vision InfoSoft Corp., www.visioninfosoft.com, Carlsbad, Calif. The company has recently updated its electrical estimating software solution, EBM (Electrical Bid Manager), which is capable of estimating jobs of all sizes.

By revamping its Plus and Pro versions, Vision InfoSoft says EBM is more suited to help contractors streamline processes while maintaining or improving the accuracy of bids and estimates.

The update brings a new level of integration with OST (On-Screen Takeoff) software from On Center Software, www.oncenter.com, The Woodlands, Texas, providing users with an easy-to-use solution from the drawing to the bid summary.

Integration improvements allow EBM customers to import and export jobs to and from the OST program, providing the most current EBM data for a complete list of OST conditions used in a takeoff.

Other enhanced EBM features include: improved OST data import and export features; increased speed in multiuser environment; improved SQL database connectivity; cut, copy, and paste functions for the Job Information screen; and improved data integrity checks for database restore procedures.



PlanSwift, www.planswift.com, Henderson, Nev., is another technology

provider that helps GCs (general contractors) automate processes such as takeoffs and reduce the risk of miscalculations. Recently, PlanSwift released PlanSwift 9, a construction takeoff and estimating software program the company says makes takeoffs a "snap."

Interface upgrades in the new version include an undo feature, a more efficient toolbar, quick search, a "Notes" sidebar, the ability to select multiple items, tabbed browsing, and an improved folder structure.

Plus, the new version allows contractors to seamlessly embed/integrate third-party apps into the software, convert units automatically, and customize page layouts for reports.



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As technology providers continue to invest in the industry by improving their

solutions for processes like bidding and takeoffs, builders and contractors have even more opportunity to harness technology and eliminate redundancies throughout the construction job cycle.

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