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## Moving Forward with the Estimate

August 17, 2010

Accurate estimating and low-margin bidding is key for construction companies that are looking to remain competitive these days. Some contractors are even pointing to these processes as some of the biggest factors driving technology initiatives forward in the industry

today.

In general, technology can help contractors improve estimating by speeding up the process and increasing accuracy, and recently more providers have been coming to market with new products, partnerships, and acquisitions.

Recently, Trimble, [www.trimble.com](http://www.trimble.com), Sunnyvale, Calif., **acquired** the assets of Accubid Systems, [www.accubid.com](http://www.accubid.com), Concord, Ont., allowing Trimble to expand its BIM (building information modeling) field solutions for MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) contractors.

"With WennSoft we're able to get more work accomplished with fewer people because our processes are more efficient."  
- Lee Ann Engel, Operations Coordinator, Design Tec

Both technology providers point to the acquisition as a way to expand product

offerings for the MEP industry. The integrated solutions will also allow the industry to automate estimating, modeling, detailing, layout, and construction, in order to extend the estimating processes even further.

Also, take for example, the recent partnership between MC2, [www.mc2-ice.com](http://www.mc2-ice.com), Memphis, Tenn., and Tech Unlimited Inc., [www.planswift.com](http://www.planswift.com), Henderson, N.V. This partnership will allow construction companies to create quantity takeoffs in the PlanSwift system and then produce an estimate in the software from MC2.

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This type of integration between takeoff and estimating software allow

contractors to move information from one system to the next, speeding up the amount of time it takes to complete takeoffs and the estimate.

As another example, BID2WIN, [www.bid2win.com](http://www.bid2win.com), Portsmouth, N.H., recently joined Viewpoint Construction Software's, [www.viewpointcs.com](http://www.viewpointcs.com), Portland, Ore., development partner program.

Through the partnership, the companies will have access to each other's platform, as well as training and learning materials. This will allow the companies to integrate products and provide better solutions for clients.

**Import & Export** to and from Primavera P6 XER, and Microsoft Project, and from Primavera P3 and Suretrak.

Maxwell Systems,

[www.maxwellsystems.com](http://www.maxwellsystems.com), King of Prussia, Pa., has also released Estimation 9.1 for electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) contractors.

This product has a new Shape Recognition capability in Estimation Digital Takeoff, allowing

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estimators to do quantity counts with the software. Other features include a highlighter pen and area calculator, among others.

These are just a few recent examples of how estimating technology is moving forward through advanced software and partnerships. This news follows a number of other product and partnership announcements in the past year, including one between On Center Software, [www.oncenter.com](http://www.oncenter.com), The Woodlands, Texas, and Vision InfoSoft, [www.visioninfosoft.com](http://www.visioninfosoft.com), Carlsbad, Calif., which allows integration from On Center's On-Screen Takeoff to Vision InfoSoft's Electrical/Plumbing Bid Manager.

These types of partnerships among software providers allow contractors to take care of the estimating process without timely and costly rework. This will allow construction companies to focus on creating the most accurate estimates possible to remain competitive today.

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