



FieldManager™

Airport construction goes paperless in Michigan after implementing

Needs analysis: Construction data was being recorded on paper reports and electronic spreadsheets, resulting in errors with redundant data and missing/incorrect numbers. Manual entry, illegible handwriting, poor data entry, duplicate data sets – all of this was ever-present in the business cycle. Manual recording of pay estimates was causing contractor payment delays. **Product implemented:** FieldManager. **Results:** Error-checking features save 'endless' hours in data processing. It integrated easily with existing systems and business processes. Long processing times for pay estimates were eliminated allowing payments to be disbursed to contractors sooner.

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“FieldManager has reduced the length of time to get pay estimates to the contractors. Many contractors have mentioned that they appreciate the fact that we are using FieldManager.”

“This project had an unusually large number of pay estimates and change orders. FieldManager saved us a lot of time and effort versus the old process.”

Bob Leisenring
Project Manager
Mead & Hunt

Airports all over the US are facing new challenges. New regulations and standards are spreading already thin budgets even thinner. Increasing efficiency in all aspects is a priority, and one area that is ripe for change is construction.

Mead & Hunt, an engineering firm based in Madison, Wisconsin, has experienced these changes firsthand, since they specialize in airport construction. The firm is often ranked in the top 500 architectural/engineering firms in the nation by Engineering News Record magazine. Being in business for more than a century, they have seen many changes in airport construction. They pride themselves on staying on the forefront of the industry, being a leader in embracing new technology and constantly searching for ways to stay on the cutting edge.

So when the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Airports Division decided to change its way of job tracking, Mead & Hunt was ready for the upgrade.

Like most companies, Mead & Hunt tracked all of their construction data on paper reports and electronic spreadsheets, almost expecting to encounter errors with redundant data and missing or incorrect numbers. It was an unfortunate part of the process. Additionally, there were many hours spent on data entry and long days dedicated to processing pay estimates.

Bob Leisenring, Project Manager for Mead & Hunt, explained that inspector's daily reports were recorded on paper by hand. Electronic spreadsheets were created using an off-the-shelf spreadsheet application, and were used for internal tracking of projects. Projects for MDOT required a series of standard forms and reports for payment and change order processing. Though this was an accepted and normal business setup, there were many places for errors to occur. Manual entry, illegible handwriting, poor data entry, duplicate data sets – all of this was ever-present in the business cycle.

“Mistakes were easier to make because it was necessary to reproduce the information between the field daily reports and the office spreadsheets and then again on to the MDOT standard forms,” Leisenring said.

Pay estimate recording was a long process that was often the result of entry errors, until the data finally made it to MDOT's construction administration system.

“[Data management] was more involved due to manual recording of pay estimates,” said Carol Aldrich, project management supervisor for MDOT's Airports Division. “The information was managed electronically once it was entered, but prior to entering it in, it was kept on paper copies in file folders.”

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In an effort to further streamline the construction management process, MDOT's Airport Division engineers chose FieldManager® for their construction projects. FieldManager had already seen extensive use in MDOT's highway construction program, with great success.

"We did see how many of the inspectors on the highway side really liked FieldManager and that it saved time due to correcting some of the simple human errors," Aldrich said.

Created by Gainesville, Fla.-based Info Tech, Inc. and the Michigan Department of Transportation, FieldManager provided the construction contract management tool that would eliminate many problems that the Airports Division and Mead & Hunt were experiencing.

Though FieldManager has traditionally been used in road construction, its flexibility and scalability allows it to be easily implemented in an airport construction setting.

FieldManager manages many aspects of the contract, including complete day-to-day details of progress on the work site, contract benchmarks, and detailed payment and change order histories. Using this information, the FieldManager user can quickly produce over 60 standard reports, respond to ad hoc inquiries and effortlessly generate contractor pay estimates. In addition, FieldManager users have instant access to detailed information for individual contract items, and can easily track contract modifications and material certifications.

Leisenring acknowledges FieldManager's ease of use and error-checking features that have saved Mead & Hunt endless hours in data processing.

"Use of electronic data transfer from the field to the office makes our work much more efficient, especially when projects are a long distance from the office," said Leisenring. "FieldManager provides a good method of checks and balances to avoid errors."

Leisenring points to a recent project for the Tulip City Airport where FieldManager was used. "This project had an unusually large number of pay estimates and change orders. FieldManager saved us a lot of time and effort versus the old process."

Implementation was simple as well, as FieldManager easily integrated into Mead & Hunt's existing systems without the need to make any changes to their business processes.

The effect that FieldManager has had on Mead & Hunt carries over to their contractors, who would normally have a longer wait time for pay estimates to be processed. FieldManager all but eliminates the long processing times, allowing payments to be disbursed to contractors sooner.

"FieldManager has reduced the length of time to get pay estimates to the contractors. Many contractors have mentioned that they appreciate the fact that we are using FieldManager," Leisenring said.

As the nation's airports continue to handle more traffic and comply with higher security standards, increased efficiency in this sector will be required. Implementing FieldManager to handle construction projects can be an integral part of moving toward a more streamlined and accountable business workflow.

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