



Barrett Paving: Saving two days a week and tens of thousands of dollars per year

Needs analysis: Barrett Paving Materials was looking for a better way to resolve issues and discrepancies in projects. The method they were using, faxes and phone calls to the agency, was time consuming, and the project closeouts and payments were delayed. **Product implemented:** FieldManager Read-Only. **Results:** They have direct access to the data tracked by the agencies and primes, "making sure we get paid our money." By identifying problems (i.e. quantity discrepancies, missing certifications) early, issue resolution is quicker and doesn't delay job closeout. Barrett estimates that the software saves them two days per week and tens of thousands of dollars per year.

"The savings in time [using FieldManager Read-Only] amounts to two days a week - minimum - saved between the project administrator and construction administrator. Cost savings in a year's time over many projects is in the tens of thousands of dollars, in my opinion."

"The ability to review the inspectors' notes and quantity postings from the beginning of the job to the end is the biggest benefit of the system by far. Being able to go back through each day and essentially rebuild the job is critical to making sure that we get paid for every single item of work that we perform on a job and that it is paid accurately. "

"We can catch any quantity discrepancy faster, which gets resolved sooner, which gets us paid faster, which closes out a job faster, resulting in savings on projects."

Ken Terveen,
Project Administrator/
Estimator
Barrett Paving Materials

Few companies can say that they have been in business for 50 years, let alone 150. But that's the reality at Barrett Paving Materials Inc. (BPMI), a paving company that services nine US states. Established in 1854, the enterprise has grown to become an integrated road construction and manufacturing company working with federal, state and local governments and employing more than 1,600 people.

Needless to say, the folks at BPMI have seen the tedious days of contract administration – full of paper, pencils and a multitude of errors. While a myriad of technological advances had occurred during the company's history, significant changes had not been made to their project workflow. There really was no system in place for communicating with the agency about a project

"Project administrators would take quantities from our accounting system and call the owner or MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation) and have them fax us their quantities to compare," said Ken Terveen, Project Administrator – Estimator at BPMI. "In order to reconcile quantities between BPMI and the owner agency, we would need to add up each pay estimate and compare the time frame that it covered with our quantities from the same period. If they differed, we would need to contact the owner and request an itemized breakdown by date range in order to determine where the discrepancy took place. This entire process could take up to a few weeks depending on how busy the project engineer was at the time."

This process was both lengthy and error-prone – two things that make doing business difficult. "Long waiting periods to get the owner's or MDOT's quantities faxed to us made it more difficult to rectify any errors."

Because of BPMI's volume of state work, Barrett took notice when MDOT implemented a software solution to manage construction projects.

The FieldManager® construction software became an integral part of MDOT's business process, alleviating many problems associated with item tracking and payments. The FieldManager software, created by Gainesville, Fla.-based Info Tech, Inc. and MDOT, provides seamless contract administration and contains data on all aspects of the contract, including complete day-to-day details of progress on the work site, benchmarks for the contract and payment history. Local agencies in Michigan soon followed suit by implementing the FieldManager software.

To help keep contractors in the loop, the FieldManager software has a module specifically for them: FieldManager Read-Only. This software grants contractors access to contract data and comprehensive reporting and inquiry tools used by contract administrators, thus alleviating unnecessary delays in the reporting and payment process. It allows the contractor to monitor accuracy periodically during the project rather than just at the end of the project.

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The folks at BPMI were early adopters of the new technology and found it easy to learn. Benefits were noticeable almost immediately.

“FieldManager Read-Only identifies problems early in a job in terms of quantities and also shows any missing certifications. With information coming in a timely manner, it enables a job to closeout more efficiently,” Terveen added.

In short, FieldManager Read-Only software gives the contracting community easy access to the information being tracked by the agencies and prime contractors. Now, they too can see what was done, where it was done and when it was done without the cumbersome tasks of the old methods - mostly multiple faxes and phone calls. Since the introduction of FieldManager Read-Only software, agencies and their contractors have seen marked improvements in the contract administration process. Job tracking is more accurate and payments are quicker.

“The ability to review the inspectors’ notes and quantity postings from the beginning of the job to the end is the biggest benefit of the system by far,” said Terveen. “Being able to go back through each day and essentially rebuild the job is critical to making sure that we get paid for every single item of work that we perform on a job and that it is paid accurately. The FieldManager Read-Only software also makes dispute resolution between the agency and/or subcontractors much easier to resolve.”

Terveen points out that they actually have less repeated contact with the agency during a job in terms of phone calls, faxes and e-mails. The FieldManager Read-Only files contain all of the information they need.

As the size of a project grows, the impact of the software at BPMI is even greater. “On larger projects, it’s huge,” says Terveen. “We can catch any quantity discrepancy faster, which gets resolved sooner, which gets us paid faster, which closes out a job faster, resulting in savings on projects. It gives us the ability to rebuild a job day-by-day, making sure we get paid our money.”

Looking at how projects were completed in the past, Terveen can say with confidence that the FieldManager Read-Only software saves BPMI time and money. “The savings in time amounts to two days a week - minimum - saved between the project administrator and construction administrator. Cost savings in a year’s time over many projects is in the tens of thousands of dollars, in my opinion.”

Terveen is anxious to see the use of the FieldManager software expand to the other states that BPMI does business in. “It’s a great product that more contractors should take advantage of.” •



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