



FieldManager™

Monthly ROI of \$4,500 and 64 man-hours at Clark County

Needs analysis: Clark County's goal was to replace their ineffective, spreadsheet-based system with an innovative software tool to improve project accountability and efficiency. **Product implemented:** Clark County chose Info Tech's FieldManager® software to update their spreadsheet-based system. Clark County now experiences better accountability, pinpoint accuracy and standardized, extensive reporting. **Results:** Four years after a successful implementation, Clark County has shown a return on investment reflected in budgets, man-hours and overall user satisfaction. They estimate saving 64 man-hours per month, equating to \$4500/month.

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Bart Arthur
Construction Manager
Clark County Department of
Public Works

Clark County, named for the intrepid explorer William Clark, lies in the southwest corner of Washington state along the Columbia River and is home to a rapidly growing population. With such growth, the need for robust infrastructure is vital.

Since the late 1980s, Clark County has been experiencing a population boom, with projections seeing the population exploding. Census data from 1990 shows the population at about 238,000, and high estimates for 2010 place the count at a whopping 470,000, nearly double that of 20 years prior.* Much of this growth is accounted for by cities along the banks of the Columbia River, as well as the county's proximity to Portland, Oregon - a booming city in its own right.

Providing the infrastructure to support such growth requires powerful tools and streamlined business processes. Clark County had been working with a paper-based system of spreadsheets for construction management for years, but the antiquated system was not providing the level of efficiency and standardization they required. This situation prompted Clark County to search for a modern software solution to effectively manage their infrastructure project administration.

Bart Arthur, construction manager for Clark County, said that spreadsheets were the standard and long paper reports changed hands repeatedly, often with a lag time up to a week or more. The accounting office had their own software as well, further polarizing the different aspects executing a project.

"The spreadsheets were difficult to maintain and required constant attention and modification," said Mr. Arthur. "Estimates on all but the simplest jobs would take several days to get...correct. The manual posting system for quantities was also cumbersome, time intensive and not friendly to data-sharing."

In 2004, Clark County turned to Info Tech's FieldManager® software to eliminate the blockages in the workflow and improve project reporting. Implementation and training was easy, with the user base adopting the software with little resistance because of the tremendous improvements over using spreadsheets.

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"Clark County staff were up and running in a matter of weeks and realized immediate benefits by providing quick access to project status information and having a standardized construction management and reporting process," said Chad Schafer, construction management specialist for Info Tech.

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Info Tech offers innovative CIP software solutions to accommodate any size of project or organization. The company provides solutions for estimation, bid letting and award, item-based construction management and post-project data analysis and management.

The FieldManager software enables Clark County to easily consolidate and track data on all aspects of a project, including complete day-to-day details of progress on the work site, benchmarks for the contract, and payment history. Using this information, Clark County personnel can quickly produce more than 60 standard reports, respond to ad hoc inquiries, and effortlessly generate contractor pay estimates. In addition, they have instant access to the percent complete for each contract item, as well as easy tracking and documentation of contract modifications and materials certifications.

When Clark County decided to implement Info Tech software in 2004, there was an anticipation to see a return on investment beyond that of dollar figures. "We switched up to what we saw as an electronically integrated system with potential for man-hour savings and better information flow," said Arthur.

Four years later, Arthur echoes that statement, explaining that time and money is saved across the board with the FieldManager software in place, streamlining project management and adding much needed clarity to communications.

Arthur points out the success of "the automated and standardized procedures and functions" as key to the improved performance in Clark County. "We all end up doing things the same way and its easy to track what is going on," Arthur continued. "We save many man-hours in the preparation of progress payments, IDRs and even billings for reimbursable work orders, etc..."

"I would estimate that it saves about 8 man-hours per job per month on just the estimates; typically about 64 man-hours a month or about \$4500/month," Arthur said.

Clark County is not alone when it comes to switching from spreadsheets to an integrated software solution. There sometimes tends to be an incorrect assumption that modern systems are difficult to implement and are suited only for large organizations. According to Joe Phelan, sales and marketing vice president for Info Tech, this is far from the truth.

"Having spreadsheet-based methods rendered ineffective by a rapidly expanding infrastructure is a typical situation faced by many organizations," Phelan said. "Making the transition from paper to a more collaborative solution is perceived as a difficult task, but Clark County demonstrates that this simply isn't the case. Although they hold a 16-30 user license, Clark County is using high-powered tools available to any size organization."

Given the population projections, keeping the infrastructure current requires management tools suited to the task. Much like William Clark took to exploring new territory, Clark County looks to the future, blazing a trail and utilizing innovative technologies like FieldManager to increase standardization, efficiency and accountability in their CIP projects. •

* Source: 2005 Population and Economic Handbook, Clark County Department of Assessment and GIS.



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