

Pullman

Power / process provider decreases estimating time & improves accuracy

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THE CHALLENGE

Pullman’s success in the estimating department led to the need for new estimating technology, as the company’s continued growth and ability to secure new business was putting undue stress on the Excel-based estimating approach used previously.

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“We could get estimates out the door with Excel,” said Bill Overstreet, Chief Estimator at Pullman Power. “But we identified an opportunity for real business benefit, and that was to close the loop between estimating and accounting. We wanted to speed up the process of converting estimates to budgets, and we weren’t going to do that with Excel.”

THE SOLUTION

Bob Charles, Vice President at Pullman Power, began researching solutions and ultimately narrowed his focus down to HD PCM. After a couple of product demonstrations, Charles, Overstreet, and the rest of the Pullman team knew that HD PCM was the right solution to achieve their objectives. It was also of great comfort to know that HD PCM was already being used very successfully by many of Pullman’s peers and partners in the power industry, such as Zachry Holdings and Alstom Power, both major power plant contractors.

“It was obvious that HD PCM is built on modern technology and that makes it extremely easy to use, plus the integration with accounting was exactly what we needed,” said Overstreet. “Beyond that, HD PCM just has extremely robust functionality that fits the way we work, including support for multiple currencies.” In addition, Overstreet cited anticipated time savings in the estimating and budgeting process as key reasons for selecting HD PCM.

With the help of internal resources, Overstreet was able to get HD PCM loaded quickly on a remote server in Maryland, where the parent company – Structural Group – was already hosting other applications for its subsidiaries. The process went smoothly, and the estimators in Kansas City were then able to access HD PCM from a thousand miles away.

The first step was to enter an existing estimate into HD PCM as a test, to make sure the totals came out reasonably close to the original version done with Excel. Overstreet was pleased that the initial test in HD PCM came within sixteen dollars of the original estimate. “It gave us great confidence to see that there was less than a hundredth of one percent difference between our original estimate and the test we did in HD PCM,” said Overstreet. After some basic training, users quickly adopted the new system and began phasing out the old Excel spreadsheets. Within six months of training, all projects greater than \$100,000 were being estimated with HD

PCM, representing more than 90% of the company’s projects.

The next stage of the initiative involved deploying HD PCM’s real-time integration with Oracle Primavera P6 scheduling software. The integration enabled Pullman to easily keep estimates and schedules in sync, forecast project-level cash flow, and run “what if” scenarios across a project’s budget and schedule.

Since onboarding HD PCM, Overstreet is particularly excited at the prospect of using HD PCM on projects in the nuclear industry, which is expected to surge in the coming decade, as well as wind farms and other new markets for the company.

The whole experience with HD PCM, “has been exactly what we hoped for,” stated Overstreet. “We’re definitely getting our money’s worth. With technology, there are so many factors that go into success, and we’re pleased to be able to say that everything went as planned and there were no surprises.”

If that sounds like a description that could also apply to any of Pullman Power’s multi-million dollar chimney projects, that’s no accident. The company’s culture instills careful planning and communication in every endeavor.

After all, success is in the details.