

Mid-State Paving & Excavation

Serving central Pennsylvania since 1999 with a primary focus on paving, Mid-State Paving & Excavation has experienced steady growth and has expanded its service offerings to include site work as well.

Steven Pope joined Mid-State Paving in 2009 as the company's Administrative Manager. Throughout his 25-year career in construction accounting, he has seen tremendous changes in the industry, including, most recently, increased competition, eliminated jobs, and tighter bidding. In response to these market conditions, Pope has found that the larger companies are bidding on much smaller jobs than in the past and workers that have been laid off are starting their own businesses and picking up the smaller work. The result - Mid-State has had to expand its services and re-evaluate its operations to remain a leader in its region.

Time-intensive and Error-prone Processes

This \$3 million company, which employs approximately 40 people in the office and field at peak production times, was using a popular generic accounting package along with a separate payroll system, plus ProContractor™ by Viewpoint for estimating.

With a combination of software applications and spreadsheets, Mid-State was limited to tracking lump sum hours and wasting time by reentering data in several places.

"We could look at week-by-week cumulative costs and compare them to the original bid amount, but this process was time-consuming and not real-time," explained Pope. "We were using QuickBooks for accounting and felt it was very limited and less than what we needed, and using Quantum for payroll was a nightmare. Our processes were time-intensive and prone to error. We needed a more powerful solution that could provide job cost tracking from the estimate through the project management process and billing; as well as more efficient payroll and better control."

With a goal of streamlining processes and improving productivity Mid-State turned to Viewpoint to help take the next step. "We needed to look to the future. It was a no brainer to grow our relationship and go with ProContractor," said Pope.

Getting a Complete Picture

ProContractor is a complete construction software solution that provides end-to-end control of critical business operations from takeoff and estimating through job cost accounting and project management, and ultimately for critical reporting and analysis.

It was the job costing component of ProContractor that strongly appealed to Mid-State Paving. With one solution, the contractor is able to easily manage change orders, budgets, and burdened labor; and do on-screen comparisons to manage profitability throughout the project.

"Analyzing costs is always important, but in an economy where there is more competition and bids must be tighter, it is even more critical for us," stated Pope.

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

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Improving Payroll

Payroll was another major challenge for Mid-State. In addition to requiring a significant amount of unnecessary data entry with their previous system, the firm's public works projects require compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act by paying prevailing wages. This requirement adds another level of complexity to the payroll process for contractors, and as a solution tailored to the needs of construction, ProContractor offers Davis-Bacon certified payroll reporting, along with workers compensation, and benefit tracking to streamline processes.

The new solution automatically calculates earnings, benefits, fringes, insurance liabilities, and taxes, as well as provides many other features that streamline the payroll process for Mid-State.

"Since ProContractor automates the calculations, we have been able to condense our three-step payroll process to a one-step process," commented Pope. "This will save us about 30 percent of our payroll personnel's time when entering payroll data. Before, it would take about two days to process our bi-weekly payroll. Now, with ProContractor, it takes about a half of a day, is more accurate, and requires less calculating and data entry."

Quick & Accurate Bidding

Mid-State Paving also values the estimating capabilities of ProContractor. "ProContractor works well with our business processes and accommodates our new approach," said Pope.

The contractor has recently changed its bidding philosophy from one that focused on a specific bid item to one that is based on how they will build the project and points to WBS codes for specific assemblies during the bid creation. "We are able to adjust and improve our processes and the software fits and accommodates as needed. We don't miss a beat."

Further, Mid-State is eager to use many of the exciting estimate verification and proposal creation features in ProContractor. "Being able to include visual assemblies and list of crews are powerful features," said Pope. "Before, we did this all on a unit basis in Excel with a spreadsheet set up for each different bid item and then merged them to create the estimate."

Now that Mid-State is bidding larger projects with its site work services, it has outgrown its simplified spreadsheets. "ProContractor will allow us to have much more detail," explained Pope. "We no longer need to enter the same materials over and over again and can easily pull materials and crews in for each estimate. ProContractor will improve our accuracy and enable us to bid faster."

Gaining Control

On the accounting side, it is all about control. "With QuickBooks, it was tough to manipulate, add, or get reports out. It had its limitations," explained Pope. "Our reporting will be much better using ProContractor. Because the solution is all in one -it synchronizes project costing and ongoing changes with hard financial data and its numerous reports give us more control and flexibility."

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— Steven Pope,
Administrative Manager

"We have re-developed our General Ledger structure to give us much greater control," said Pope. "There is no comparison with the control between the two programs. With QuickBooks, our users could go in and change or delete transactions, leaving much room for mistakes and lack of accountability and data integrity. However, with ProContractor, the structure of the program guides the user to follow certain important procedures. It is all automated and provides a complete audit trail and the security features enable us to lock down any part of the application we choose."

ProContractor will enable Mid-State Paving to know its daily costs two weeks sooner than with its previous methods. It also gives them the ability to do daily costs versus waiting for payroll to be processed. "The information is entered once and costed to the appropriate job," explained Pope. "One-time data entry is a huge time saver and we're all looking at the same numbers in real-time."

With cost of completion data, Mid-State will be able to easily determine if they are over or under on billings. Pope explained, "Since we are now working on larger jobs than in the past, cost of completion and work-in-progress details are much more important. This information will help us to better know where we are on a job and enable us to look at quantity of completion and price per unit and get a cost of completion – ultimately providing us better insight into the profit or loss on a project."

The history with audit trails helps aid in decision making on the production side. Mid-State wasn't doing any production analysis with its previous system. Now with ProContractor, they can look at historical information to understand job performance and make improvements on future jobs.

All-in-One Solution

Mid-State Paving & Excavation plans to continue to expand its use of ProContractor to further streamline its processes. "All the tools of the trade are there," said Pope. "We can start small and gradually use more features as we need to and as we become more familiar with the solution. ProContractor is comprehensive and we can grow with it."

"We really like that everything is tied into one solution with ProContractor," said Pope. "The flow between the estimating, accounting, and other components is tremendous and the navigation is smooth. ProContractor makes it easy to find and report details, will save us time, and definitely increase our accuracy."

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