Elder Construction prides itself on its relationships. Within the organization and with clients, Elder employees strive for integrity, honesty and professionalism. They also work to be good stewards of company and client resources, and aspire to thoughtful decision-making.

Elder founder Tom Elder grew the company one project at a time with all of these ideals in mind. He started the business in 1994, after he had accumulated 20 years of construction experience. It has grown, and now his sons Chris and Patrick have taken their place in the organization.

The Elder family has a passion for the construction business, which has contributed to their continued success.

But growth can bring challenges, and last year Elder Construction found itself at a crossroads. It was time to make a decision for the future.

Research Phase
Despite its volume of business—$25 million GAR—Elder had never centralized its software management. The team used a combination of Computerease, Excel, OnCenter, Goldmine, and ISQFT. These scattered resources complicated processes as well as internal communication.

"In my area, we were simply using Excel," said Elder Pre-Construction Manager Matt Melssen. "It’s tough to sort estimates and Excel can have the tendency to make mistakes if you are missing formulas. There was a layer of concern there, and we had to make sure we were triple checking just to make sure the program was calculating correctly."

Elder employees began to look for a solution. During an in-house assessment of their construction business management strategy, they realized they needed:
• Better reporting.
• More insight/data to make high-level decisions.
• Technology that would work with mobile devices.
• A system that would support rapid growth with centralized information.

“When we started our search, we had mapped out 14 software programs, which was a lot. We quickly narrowed it down to about three based on our needs,” said Chris Elder, President of Elder Construction.

Hands-on experience with Viewpoint’s software helped Elder employees see the value and opportunities in the ProContractor module.

“Tom Moon, who we worked with closely on the front end, did an excellent job of taking the time to set up demos, both on the estimating, the accounting and project management side,” Elder said. “He was just very patient and very thorough. First he understood our needs and then helped us get answers to the questions we had. He came out with one of the consultants and we hung around this conference room for the day. I pulled in the Estimators and Project Managers and we had it up on the big screen and we just walked through it.”

Seeing and interacting with the software gave the construction business strategy team a feel for ProContractor’s real-time offerings.

The modules provided solutions for each of the needs the company had identified. It offered upgraded reporting and quick high-level data insight. It included pricing and estimating and project management abilities—with everything tied together through communication across departments. Centralized information streamlined the process and supported the growth that Elder was anticipating.

ProContractor allowed Elder Construction to install a single software solution that would manage entire project lifecycles from bid to project completion.

“The decision to go with Viewpoint was the integration between modules,” Elder
said. “The estimating, the accounting and the project management were all part of the package.”

The choice made sense for a lot of reasons, and provided Elder with a chance to work with Viewpoint—a win-win for the two companies. “ProContractor made it reasonable for a mid-sized general contractor to get involved and be a part of Viewpoint, which has a great reputation,” Elder said.

The ProContractor Choice
There were some concerns at the beginning. As Melssen pointed out, change is always difficult. It is a big step that requires commitment and a willingness to embrace new technology.

Actually working in the software set minds at ease. “It’s been a seamless transition,” Melssen said.

The positive results were immediate. Options such as the sorting feature provided information that went beyond expectations. The large database offered a wealth of knowledge that was previously unavailable. “We’ve been able to capture our historical costs a lot better and keep track of them, update them quickly and make it available for every Estimator to grab,” Melssen explained.

With the availability of information, the estimation process has quickened considerably. That was made possible by:

- Clonable jobs built into the database
- The ability to include or omit quantities in estimates
- Framework to construct alternate estimates

One popular feature—among many—was the estimation alternates. Estimators can explore different pricing scenarios by changing components of the quote.

“Construction budgets are often far off from where the estimates actually come in and we have to go through an extensive effort to bring down the cost,” Melssen said. “The alternates feature in ProContractor is the best I’ve ever seen. It’s been a huge benefit.”

The project management aspect of the software keeps jobs running on schedule. Real-time information allows for on-the-spot changes as needed.
Mobile capabilities provided by ProContractor are another favorite feature. Workers in the office and in the field are communicating better than ever before. Mobile access (from iOS, Android or Windows devices) has given Elder Construction access to critical data from any location. It has also improved project control through increased visibility and synchronized information across departments. “The mobile app is a huge part of the technology platform now, especially with our field staff,” Elder said.

**Long-term Results**

After six months with ProContractor, Elder Construction has worked through the learning process and has addressed the questions that arise anytime you undergo this kind of change.

“We’re off and rolling,” Melssen said. “It’s the only software program I’m using right now to price estimates whether it’s a very detailed final estimate or just a quick cost model I’ve got to turn around in two days. I use the same program and the same format and it’s producing the results we need.”

Project Managers and Accountants are enjoying similar success.

And, perhaps most importantly, working with ProContractor from Viewpoint has allowed the Elder family and other company employees spend more time on bidding, planning and executing jobs, and less time on paperwork. It’s also given them more time to spend on projects they enjoy.

Tom Elder has always looked for ways to build better, whether with bricks and mortar or through support of nonprofits within the community. Through Elder’s association with Viewpoint, Tom and the rest of the Elder Construction family have more time to devote to each of those endeavors.

“The decision to go with Viewpoint was the integration between modules. The estimating, the accounting and the project management were all part of the package.”

– Chris Elder, President
Elder Construction

© 2016 Viewpoint, Inc. dba Viewpoint Construction Software. All Rights Reserved. Viewpoint®, Viewpoint Construction Software®, Vista™ by Viewpoint, ProContractor™ by Viewpoint, Viewpoint for Content Management™, Viewpoint for Mobile™, Viewpoint for Projects™, Viewpoint for Field View™, Viewpoint for Estimating™, and Jobpac by Viewpoint are trademarks or registered trademarks of Viewpoint, Inc., in the United States and/or other countries. Other names and brands may be claimed as the property of others.