



 BUILTWORLDS

**PROJECT
MANAGEMENT
SOFTWARE**

WINTER
2016



INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

The construction industry has long been dependent on paper and procedure. Workers on site and in the office spend hours each week filling out and sorting paperwork for a single project. Tracking these can be difficult, and often, problems arise due to lost or misfiled documents. Piecing together a paper trail can be difficult, if not impossible, and results in confusion, frustration, and lack of accountability in the workplace.

Enter project management (PM) software. These tools are moving the paper documentation process online and creating a more streamlined and efficient workflow. Delays due to processing are reduced, as all parties have instant access to all documentation. Additionally, accountability is greatly enhanced as the paper trail is easy to follow and review.

Although there are many different PM software options available, they all share two fundamental benefits. First, they greatly enhance collaboration because all of the parties involved in a particular project share a single platform to communicate; time to complete a project is shortened and costs are controlled. Second, because documentation is organized and easily accessible, executives can manage risk more effectively.



PENTA’s software is mostly targeted toward labor-intensive specialty contractors. They offer a large integrated software solutions framework with many different capabilities and features, with the ultimate goal to manage risk more effectively through efficiently collecting information from the field and sharing it with the rest of the team. PENTA tracks all aspects of projects, which starts with importing the base line budget from a client’s estimating system.

PENTA’s ability to manage risk — especially for contractors on jobs where labor is a significant cost lever — is a major benefit of the software, according to Tom Simson, Director of Product Consulting at PENTA. “A mechanical contractor with multiple crews on new construction or renovation projects or an industrial contractor with large crews performing shut down or turnaround jobs at power plants or refineries” are just some of the types of clients that benefit from PENTA’s technology, Simson says. “Knowing on a daily basis, or even by shift, whether your crews are meeting productivity targets is critical,” he says.

One of PENTA’s key features is its job costing management capability. Through the software, you can manage the margin and the change in margin based on the real-time and projected costs of the project. When managing multiple projects, the software allows you to view those with the greatest margin of loss, allowing you to hone your focus.

PENTA also offers forecasting capabilities. “Project forecasting capabilities enable early indication of cost overruns that could negatively impact the planned margin allowing corrective action to resolve issues,” Simson says. This is done through “monitoring labor productivity targets against actual productivity rates and managing against margin fade.” Using PENTA, front-line crew supervisors can easily report labor, equipment, and productivity information via a mobile device and lets the contractor analyze their performances more quickly.

In addition, PENTA’s role-based workbench tools allow users to graphically display the information contained within their cost code and monitor the key performance indicators that are relevant to their role.





According to Simson, PENTA differentiates itself through its flexible structure, which allows clients to tailor the software to suit their business model and workflow. What’s more, contractors from different lines of work — concrete, electrical, and more — can customize the software depending on their needs. “A flexible work breakdown structure allows contractors to define cost code schemes that enable them to manage their jobs how they need to,” Simson says. “PENTA supports both standardization as well as the ability to create unique cost coding schemes where necessary. Cost code structures can be defined as standard across all jobs, defined as standard at a job type-by-job type level, or uniquely assigned on a job-by-job basis if necessary.”

Kirk Heminger, Marketing Manager at PENTA, says that to overcome resistance to adoption, you need a “commitment from the management to implement the software and clearly communicate the benefits to the workers.”

A crawl, walk, run strategy is also suggested. “Start by introducing simple processes during the ‘crawl’ phase, and make sure that these initial users gain a personal benefit from adopting the new process,” Heminger says. Users will embrace more complex processes in the ‘walk’ and ‘run’ phases if they’ve already experienced benefits firsthand.

To learn more please visit www.penta.com.