

Client Information

Company:	Commonwealth Electric Company
Industry:	Specialty Contractor
Construction Services:	A full service specialty contractor delivering specialized services for electrical design and build, emergency repair, preventive maintenance, traffic signals and lighting, communications, technical services and low voltage projects
Corporate Headquarters:	Lincoln, NB
Territory / Locations:	offices in Arizona, Nebraska and Iowa
Client Information:	Founded in 1987 Annual Revenue \$85M #179 Engineering News-Record Top 600 500 union employees 4,000 vendor invoices processed monthly 400 customer invoices managed per week 500+ paychecks processed weekly
Software Applications:	eCMS, Account Payable, Accounts Receivable, General Ledger, Job Cost, Order Processing, Human Resources, Payroll, Time & Material Billing, Equipment Accounting, User-defined Columns, Document Imaging/Workflow, eForms, Project Collaborator, and Business Intelligence, 76 eCMS users
Technology Environment:	IBM System i



ABOUT Computer Guidance Corporation

Since 1981, Computer Guidance offers the most complete, proven and reliable construction management solution for architecture, engineering and commercial construction companies. Computer Guidance's eCMS solution provides financial accounting and project management applications supported by advanced business intelligence and innovative productivity tools. eCMS is recognized as the solution of choice for top general and specialty contractors in the CFMA Information Technology Survey and has been selected by the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) as the construction management solution of choice for its members nationwide since 2010. Computer Guidance customers are recognized among the Top 400 Contractors and Top 50 Contractors by Engineering News-Record (ENR).

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CLIENT CASE STUDY



Commonwealth Electric Company

Specialty Contractor

This case study was originally published in 2005 regarding their solution selection and implementation of CMS and was updated in 2011 to reflect the ongoing impact of Computer Guidance's solutions for the organization.

The Company

Commonwealth Electric Company, a full service specialty contractor based in Lincoln, Nebraska, has built a reputation as an industry leader in delivering specialized services for electrical design and build, emergency repair, preventive maintenance, traffic signals and lighting, communications, technical services and low voltage projects. Providing the highest quality service on time and done right the first time has been the key to customer satisfaction throughout its 24-year history. Commonwealth Electric Company, with offices in Arizona, Nebraska and Iowa, is known for its adoption and utilization of advanced technologies. Both Sue Schlake, Director of Management Information Systems and Glen Moss, Chief Financial Officer, have years of combined experience in financial and technical operations in the construction industry, and they pay close attention to the organization's changing technology needs and its impact on the overall performance. As Computer Guidance Corporation introduces new innovative solutions for added automation of construction companies' business processes for improved operational efficiency and greater productivity, Commonwealth Electric Company actively embraces the new features and functionalities to improve its bottom line.

Computer Guidance Corporation has been a trusted solution provider to Commonwealth Electric Company for more than a decade and the customer greatly values the benefits that first CMS and then eCMS construction financial and project management solutions have brought to the organization. Commonwealth Electric Company originally implemented Computer Guidance's CMS solution in 1994 and upgraded to eCMS in 2010.

The Challenge

The economic downturn of 2008 and 2009 demanded greater cost controls and labor efficiencies from the organization. While Commonwealth Electric Company anticipated potential revenue loss, the management team wanted to ensure that profit margins remain the same on each project and work order. In addition, the company wanted to secure its experienced and knowledgeable talent pool avoiding downsizing its workforce.

Challenge

- Legacy system could not meet business demands
- Business climate demanded tighter labor cost management
- Company required better resources utilization
- Communication across the organization was inadequate
- Unavailability of information to support business-critical decisions
- Risk of profit margin loss

Solution

- A fully integrated financial and project management solution
- Robust Job Cost and core financial management applications
- Customized tracking and reporting tool for advanced performance measures

Results

- Improved profitability as a result of tighter financial controls
- Increased efficiency by 10% since solution implementation
- Greater productivity by automation of key business processes
- Enterprise-wide communication and collaboration

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This all signified the need to rigorously manage job costs, analyze performance and estimate future expenditures. In addition, Commonwealth Electric Company required a solution that would scale with the changes of the business and continue to meet their needs as market conditions fluctuated.

The Solution

Commonwealth Electric Company determined that the organization needs to establish real-time data exchange between its field operations and the back-office staff. In order to better utilize its workforce and firmly manage its labor costs, Commonwealth Electric Company subscribed to Computer Guidance's Time & Material Billing application in addition to the core financial applications. Further, a custom labor efficiency report was developed in partnership with Computer Guidance to provide weekly labor progress per cost category for selected projects, measuring if specific projects are under, on or over budget. The labor efficiency report not only displayed information entered by either the financial or the project management team, but created situational awareness for proactive decision-making.

With the upgrade to eCMS, Commonwealth Electric Company applied the full capabilities of the new solution suite by implementing Project Collaborator, Document Imaging, Workflow, eForms and Business Intelligence applications, employing full automation, optimization and real-time updates for its service operations.

The Results

The implementation of the entire suite of Computer Guidance's eCMS solution has paid Commonwealth Electric Company handsome dividends. eCMS now supports Commonwealth Electric Company's key operational processes providing real-time performance measures, cost controls and proactive management of the company's 4,000 customers accounts.

"eCMS has been a critical component in the growth and efficiency of the business keeping our profit margins at an all-time high and sustains our workforce of 500 employees." says Glen Moss, Chief Financial Officer, Commonwealth Electric Company.

Computer Guidance's solutions are leveraged to understand future labor demand and potential costs for both reactive and proactive service work. The expanded productivity tools in eCMS, such as Business Intelligence, create even more visibility into historical working cost allowing us to accurately bid for future projects.



Glen Moss
Chief Financial Officer
Commonwealth Electric Company

"Computer Guidance Corporation was selected due to its feature-rich and fully integrated financial management application, its innovative approach to electronic workflow and document imaging processes as well as its cohesive, detailed implementation plan supported by an on-site professional services team."

Glen states that "We have always done a good job at tracking and managing the multi-million dollar projects as the details quickly determine the best course of action. But with an increased number of smaller projects below the million dollar mark, instant access to determining factors were difficult to obtain quickly in order to determine exact costs. eCMS gives us the ability to view the level of detail we need on every service job and work order and allows us to accurately track historical expenditures so cost bidding is streamlined and contract administration is more effective."

The benefits are compelling. As a result of the integrated financial and project management solution, project managers are empowered to re-assign resources, proactively plan preventive maintenance schedules and even reduce work backlog. "Having real-time view into the operation has empowered project managers to improve efficiencies by 10% since implementing eCMS" comments Glen.

"When we implemented CMS, we were easily able to process over 1,000 invoices in a day, which was a challenge before. With the continued gains from CMS and eCMS, we have been able to keep up with the business needs without increasing overhead." indicates Sue Schlake, Director of Management Information Systems.

In addition to increased operational efficiencies, Commonwealth Electric Company has been able to reduce expenses due to the integrated Job Cost application in eCMS and Project Collaborator. Glen further highlights the additional benefits of the solution. "Job Cost is extremely strong in eCMS. Production of job cost reports takes only a few minutes and I can drill down into the data and obtain the details needed to make informed decisions. Our project managers can access real-time information in the field that we can share across the enterprise. There are no delays in information sharing. With better access to business-critical information, project managers can make informed decisions fast, no matter the job size or location."

The solution in its entirety has supported the company's mission— providing the highest quality of service, on time and right the first time.

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Sue Schlake
Director of MIS
Commonwealth Electric Company