

applications *in the field*

Estimating software helps mechanical contractor grow

Northern Air Corp. in Vadnais Heights, Minn., has come a long way in the past 16 years.

Today, with 120 employees and \$40 million in annual revenue, the company has become one of the largest mechanical and electrical contractors in the upper Midwest.

The company said it believes a large part of its success was due to switching five years ago from manual estimating to an automated takeoff and estimating system. NAC chose Maxwell Systems Estimation Logistics, construction-specific automating software designed to help HVAC contractors produce professional estimates and reports. With features such as a customizable database, and round and oval fabrication aids, Northern Air says it gained a competitive edge that helped them better bid and win jobs.

"The details we get from our takeoffs have taken the guessing out of bidding," said Bill Zellmer, project manager and senior estimator at NAC. "With Estimation Logistics, we feel 100 percent confident with each bid. This software certainly is one of the reasons for our continued success."

Since installing Estimation Logistics, NAC said it has reduced the time needed to complete estimates, improved accuracy of bids, reduced material costs, and streamlined business processes. Now, the company is able to bid more jobs, win jobs with accurate information, and better manage and complete projects.

For example, Northern Air recently competed to renovate Oak-Land Junior High School in Stillwater, Minn. The project was slated to last two years, include winter work, and cost \$4.3 million.

Ordinarily, an estimate for a project of this magnitude would have taken at least eight days to complete. However, by doing a digital takeoff with Estimation Logistics, NAC was able to produce an accurate estimate, easily meet the proposal deadline, and ultimately, secure the contract.



Northern Air Corp. used Estimation Logistics software to bid on a project at Oak-Land Junior High School in Stillwater, Minn. The company won the bid on the \$4.3 million project.

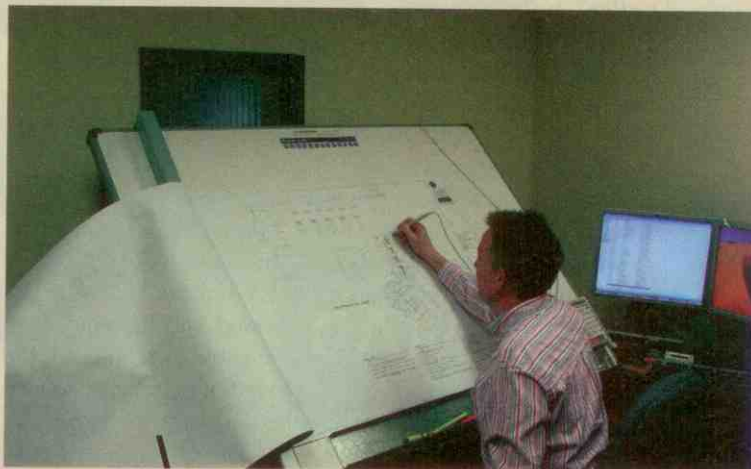
Estimation Logistics helped NAC get better prices on materials, company officials add.

"The material buyout was (also) a detailed takeoff," said Zellmer. "We were able to send our digital takeoff directly to suppliers, and got what we felt was a really good purchase on the material for the project, well in advance of having boots on the ground."

And as the project unfolded, the software helped NAC to align actual costs with initial estimates. The company was also equipped to

better manage change orders timely and accurately, which helped to improve accountability and cash flow.

"When you get it right upfront, everything else falls into place," Zellmer said. "The majority of our effort is upfront in the estimating part of it. When the detail comes out, we can use that to drive a better material



An unidentified estimator at Northern Air Corp. completes a takeoff using Maxwell Systems Estimation Logistics software along with a digitizer board and stylus pen.

purchase. And then we can keep a close eye on the labor and materials throughout the project, and know what direction things are heading."

In the end, the job was completed on time and on budget — as were other projects that NAC accomplished using Maxwell Systems Estimation Logistics, including airport maintenance shops, an addition to a county jail, another high school, and several projects for the city of Minneapolis.

Library project uses new hanging system

A contractor in New York had the chance to use a new bracket system from Duro Dyne when it tackled a library project in Elmont, N.Y.

The new KV Brackets were recently installed in the New

The Only Choice!



OMNI DUCT
SYSTEMS

Complete Your Jobs Quicker by Outsourcing
the Fabrication to Omni Duct Systems

omniduct.com

Round, Rectangular & Oval Ductwork Since 1982 - 888.444.3828 in the U.S.