



Maxwell Systems Case Study Border Electric/Mechanical

Product

Maxwell Systems™ Estimation Logistics™ tailored for electrical contractors

Company

Border Electric/Mechanical
El Paso, TX

Industry

Border Electric/Mechanical is involved with electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and HVAC commercial construction. The company offers design/build, design/assist, and value engineering services, specializing in warehouse, manufacturing, distribution, military, and call centers.

Challenges

Border's estimators created estimates manually, which was a time-consuming and arduous process prone to errors. With military a large part of their customer base, it was critical to be exact and adhere to stringent practices and specifications.

Solution

The company uses Maxwell Systems Estimation Logistics for complete estimating that ties together estimates, labor needs, and cost analysis. Because the solution is specifically designed for electrical contractors, Border is able to automate its bidding process and improve its productivity.

Results

Using Maxwell Systems Estimation Logistics, Border has increased the speed and accuracy of its takeoff and estimation process and streamlined operations.

Border Electric/Mechanical (Border) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of EMCOR Group, Inc. As a leader in electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and HVAC commercial construction, Border serves the El Paso, Texas and southern New Mexico area. With just under 500 employees, the company offers design/build, design/assist, and value engineering services, specializing in warehouse, manufacturing, distribution, military, and call centers.

"The construction market in our region is about 10 years behind the curve," explained Carlos Santoyo, electrical estimator at Border. "Everything is just now going to AutoCAD and BIM (Building Information Modeling) because of the influx of the military in the area and its need to incorporate these technologies into its facilities."

Border is focused on remaining ahead of the competition by offering superior services and maximizing its operational efficiencies. Leveraging the right technologies is an important part of reaching its goals.

Time-Consuming & Error-Prone Estimates

In 2002, Santoyo left his job in the field and became an estimator for the growing electrical contracting company. At that point Border was developing all of its estimates by hand and had just purchased Maxwell Systems Estimation Logistics to help streamline its takeoff and estimating processes.

Creating estimates manually was a time-consuming and arduous process for the estimators at Border. "For simple projects, it could take us four to five hours to create an estimate and for larger jobs, like hospitals, it could take us three weeks," explained Santoyo.

Not only was it time consuming, but the manual process was also prone to errors. "Accuracy is very important on every construction project," said Santoyo. "Now, with the military being one of our largest customers, being exact is a must. Our military customers have very stringent practices and specifications and there is no room for mistakes."

The Complete Solution

With Maxwell Systems Estimation Logistics, Border uses a complete estimating solution that ties together estimates, labor needs, and cost analysis. The Estimation Logistics Electrical software bundle that is specifically designed for electrical contractors, Border is able to automate its bidding process and improve its productivity.

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With Estimation Logistics, Border can now generate takeoffs directly from digital plan files instead of using bulky paper blueprints. Once the plans are loaded in the system, the estimators can easily measure, count, or both; then choose their cost item or assembly from the Estimation Logistics database. With the variety of built-in assemblies that can be taken off in a single touch and the ability to create custom assemblies, there is a significant reduction in the time it takes to develop an estimate.

By capturing the graphical takeoff on its digital plans, Border can easily modify details such as assemblies or fixture counts. And, the overlay feature in Estimation Logistics enables estimators to compare different versions of their plans if major changes are made.

“Estimation Logistics is easy to use. For little projects, there is essentially no setup required and for larger projects, such as a military headquarters or office complex, the setup takes just a day or so,” explained Santoyo. “We can easily build the picture, drop in the assembly, and review mechanical sheets, for example. Then we provide the total counts of the fixtures and simply drag and drop those fixtures as we go through the plan,” said Santoyo. “If we miss something in the plan, we can just fill it in. We don’t have to build it all over again. It is simple click and drag and we can always go into the summary and make adjustments on the spot.”

Border has been able to easily customize the estimating solution to meet its specific business needs. “We haven’t had to change the way we do business to fit the technology,” said Santoyo. “Estimation Logistics offered us a good place to start and we were able to add our own conduit runs and new assemblies, for example, based on our company’s center of best practices and focus on key features of the solution that streamline our particular processes.”

After using the product for more than six years, the estimators from Border recently went to a training session on Estimation Logistics to learn more about the newest features. “We want to take full advantage of all of the capabilities in the solution, including the comprehensive reporting features such as the buyout and cost coding reports that we haven’t utilized in the past.”

“The training was definitely worthwhile and the team at Maxwell Systems has provided excellent service to us over the years,” stated Santoyo. “It doesn’t matter who answers the phone, they are always very responsive, helpful, and able to quickly find answers to our questions.”

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Increased Productivity

“Estimation Logistics has made our takeoff and estimation process much quicker and streamlined our operations,” said Santoyo. “The most significant savings is our time. We can now complete an estimate in half the time. For a major project that could take up to three weeks to estimate manually, it now takes about a week and a half. This time savings allows us to do more estimates, which increases our chances of winning more jobs.”

Santoyo also explained how he believed that Estimation Logistics is “as fast and as effective as the person using it wants it to be. It is user-friendly and highly customizable and allows me to go in and do things according to how I want them to be done. The software does not dictate how I must perform a task.”

By automating the bidding process with Estimation Logistics, Border has been able improve productivity, gain more control over its estimates, produce more accurate and professional estimates, analyze pricing, lower costs associated with bidding, and win more jobs.

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