

# applications *in the field*

## Software can help efficiency in shop as well as field

Profitability. It's even more important in the current economy.

Yours depends heavily on volume of work and how closely your projects are to your original estimates.

There is an array of software tools available to help streamline each aspect of your business to be more efficient, productive and profitable.

However, having different systems can contribute confusion among your estimators, project managers, administrators and field technicians.

Finding integrated business management construction software that offers the features and functions required by HVAC and sheet metal contractors will help your team dramatically.

Wherever they work, employees will be equipped to share real-time data, improve communication, increase accuracy, and more.

The details you takeoff and estimate can be automatically carried through to project scheduling and used in procurement and billing. Integrated software also allows employees in the field to access work history, collect data efficiently, and share details with the team instantaneously.

The ultimate value is that you will better understand your costs, productivity and profitability from the moment of plan takeoff to cash and close of job. You will have simplified data entry, comprehensive

reporting, and adaptable workflow to manage your company's financial operations with efficiency and flexibility.

## Automation

By automating your takeoff and estimating you will gain that competitive edge, helping you quickly and efficiently produce professional estimates that are extremely accurate.

With a product that offers integrated financial management, you can synchronize job costing and ongoing changes with hard financial data. And with an integrated procurement process, you will be able to efficiently buyout jobs and track materials, purchase at the best possible prices, and manage projects accurately.

Contractors using integrated construction software are better equipped to handle work, eliminate redundancies and improve processes.

For example, Alliance Industrial Refrigeration in Walnut, Calif., uses Maxwell Systems' American Contractor business management software, which Barbara Thompson, construction administrator for the company, explained "has enabled us to handle a larger volume of paperwork, service calls, work orders, receivables and payables, and coordinate purchase orders. There's no double entry, so we can handle more work with the same amount of people."

It was a big change from the way they used to do things, she added.

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"Every man was an island at our company before using this software. Everybody did their own thing, used their own forms and so on," Thompson said. "Now, we can get the information we want in a timely way by following a clear process. With American Contractor, we have the ammunition to enforce good accounting practices and procedures, and it has helped make things much more professional."

## Collaboration

Team collaboration is key. The challenge is bridging the gap between office employees and those in the field. Integrated software can help eliminate the dividers between these different departments.

Project managers can use integrated software to work more effectively wherever they may be. Documents can be managed more efficiently and data entry can be reduced, allowing more time for analyzing job details and pinpointing profit erosion. With easy access to cost reports and alerts, project managers can be notified when a subcontract item exceeds its budget.

And they can see why and remedy the problem before it becomes costly.

Through the system, the dispatch team can easily view a technician's workload, scheduled maintenance requirements, and customer details to quickly assess work and dispatch effectively. They can communicate order details to field technicians through text messaging or another device, ensuring that they have details needed to efficiently complete their work.

Atlanta-based United Maintenance needed to automate operations to manage its 60 employees, control a service fleet of 24 trucks, and deliver service to a number of high-profile clients that rely heavily on their services. Service manager Kent Montgomery and his team of dispatchers manually handled more than 100 calls per day.

By using Maxwell Systems Management Suite and MaxService wireless service and dispatching software, United Maintenance streamlined its operations, allowing for quicker billing, more controlled cash flow, and improved customer service.


With more than 700 contract customers and a workload that averages nearly 50,000 hours of service, those efficiencies make a big impact on the HVAC company's bottom line.

"We wanted single-source responsibility and MaxService delivered," Montgomery said. "With Maxwell Systems, we could now have a seamless system for both accounting and service."

With MaxService in place, United Maintenance has "almost instant data access," he said.

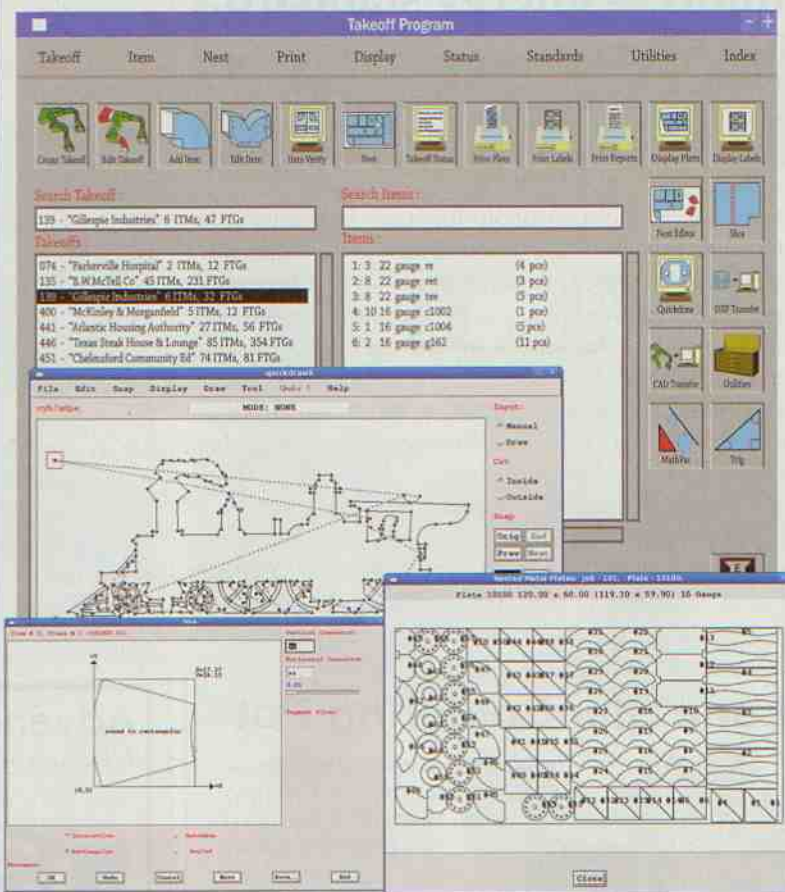
Work histories are sent out with the ticket so

that technicians don't have to call each other or the dispatcher when they have a question.

"With all of that time on the phone asking questions and waiting on hold, we had a lot of unapplied labor," Montgomery added. "Now, if a technician has a question, he can get an instant e-mail with all the data he needs. It saves each tech at least an hour of time every day." 

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The screenshot displays the 'Takeoff Program' interface. At the top, a menu bar includes 'Takeoff', 'Item', 'Nest', 'Print', 'Display', 'Status', 'Standards', 'Utilities', and 'Index'. Below the menu is a toolbar with icons for 'Clear', 'Add Item', 'Add Item', 'Item Verify', 'Item', 'Takeoff Item', 'New Part', 'Item Links', 'Print Report', 'Display Item', and 'Display Links'. The main area is divided into sections for 'Search Takeoff' and 'Search Item'. The 'Search Takeoff' section lists several items with their specifications, such as '135 - "Gilligan Industries" 6 ITMs, 47 FTGs'. The 'Search Item' section lists items with their specifications, such as '1-3 22 gauge rtr (4 pcs)'. A smaller window in the foreground shows a technical drawing of a duct system with dimensions and labels. Another window shows a detailed grid of duct specifications.

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