

Case Study

Hickory Developments

Construction Management Solution

Background

Hickory Developments is a fast-growing construction company based in Melbourne that employs 150 people and operates throughout Australia.

Their developments include residential apartments, corporate facilities, commercial showrooms and offices. Projects include the US\$130.5 million Martha Cove in Victoria, a master planned residential marina community on the Mornington Peninsula. Martha Cove has a 200-berth marina, a market, Alfresco and café dining, as well as over 100 ocean and marina front apartments and terraces.

Hickory is also building the US\$52 million Traffic Accident Commission headquarters in Geelong. When complete, the development will include public and retail spaces, with a net lettable area of 15,000m², and is expected to bring an estimated US\$51 million annually in economic benefits for the Geelong region. The project building will achieve a 5-star energy rating and utilize the latest in ecologically sustainable design principles

Requirements

Hickory generates thousands of drawings and documents on its projects that need to be filed, stored and distributed. They found that tools such as paper documents and individual email accounts were not efficient enough to manage the flow of information with the client and other key members of the project team.

Hickory required a scalable, company-wide solution to managing project information that would help support their growth and facilitate communication with external parties.

Solution

Based on recommendations and discussions with other builders who were using the product successfully, Hickory implemented the Aconex document management and collaboration solution. Hickory has been using Aconex for the past five years and has 35 projects on the system.

Through using Aconex, Hickory and its project partners are able to view, distribute and track their documents and correspondence at any time and from any location, using one central web-based platform. They have found that using the system has increased their efficiency and given them more control.

Increased Efficiency

Lia Georgiou, Contracts Administrator at Hickory Developments, said, "It made sense to us to try to bring all aspects of a building project together in one system. We were looking for something that would let us share plans, information, project updates and performance. The directors are always interested in anything that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of what we do."

Hickory aims to have all their clients using Aconex. By managing information electronically, Aconex reduces printing and paper waste, saves money on postage and couriers, and improves job efficiency.



Georgiou said: “We are encouraging our architects and engineers to use Aconex at the tender phase of a project as well as during the construction phase. This way the system becomes a complete work in progress framework. We are trying to make our office a lot more paper efficient by reducing paper use. We are also setting up standards and procedures to make it easier for people to use Aconex more effectively.”

Aconex enables instant access to documents and correspondence items so that anyone working on a project can find their files easily, rather than wasting time sorting through mountains of paper.

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“Aconex makes it a lot easier to share information on any project,” said Georgiou. “Time management becomes a lot easier and structured as anybody can access the system and manage a project. It puts every project into a shared environment that can be managed and controlled.”

Georgiou believes that the system helps streamline processes for all participants. “The consultants and architects upload drawings. The sub contractors have access to the site once the job has been uploaded. Architects and consultants use the document and correspondence management function and sub contractors can access the documents they need to complete a job. Aconex speeds everything up especially on site. It means they can have updated drawings straight away.”

When implementing a new system for managing information, training and support is important. Hickory has found that the better project partners are trained, the more time the system saves.

“To have the maximum benefit everyone needs to be capable and confident using the system,” said Georgiou. “Aconex manages training and support very well. If we have people that need training, Aconex come here and train them and they have a very good 24-hour help desk.”

More Control

Hickory has found that the benefits of using Aconex increase as project participants become accustomed to using the system.

“We use the system to send general communication, drawings, documents, progress claims, progress payments, notice of delays... everything that applies to managing a project from start to completion. It provides a collaboration platform and a register for all participants in a project. It acts as a centralized repository for all documents and correspondence and that takes care of version control as well.”

Georgiou believes that Aconex has the capacity to grow with the organizations that it is servicing, which is helping them to manage their growth. “Our company is growing very quickly and a service like this was ideal to help us manage the impact of growth. It scales up with us. We dealt with concerns through training and using the system. They visit clients and sub contractors to train them. That helps us hugely and it would be difficult without it. They visit us to get feedback on how the system works and what improvements we would like to see. This happens once or twice a year. They are very proactive with customers.”

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Georgiou said that majority of Hickory’s document control is done through Aconex. “It eliminates all sorts of problems. Initially we used Aconex on a project-by-project basis. Now nearly all of our projects are through Aconex. It makes our lives easier. I would highly recommend the product.”