



Sage Construction Intuita

Case Study: Interclass Plc

Established in 1976, Interclass prides itself in delivering an efficient, cost-effective, quality construction service throughout Central England. By choosing unison construction as its IT solution in May 2004, Interclass has already benefited from intuita's partnership approach.

Having developed into a group of companies in the late 1980's, Interclass Holdings now comprises Interclass Plc, Interclass Construction Services Plc and Interclass Surfacing Ltd.

Interclass Plc deals with the larger projects, typically those that are above £250,000. Recent work includes a new depot for Malvern District Council worth £750,000, a £1 million refurbishment contract at Burton Hospital and major contracts at schools and universities, helping to build Interclass' specialist education portfolio. Interclass Construction Services Plc works on small building contracts, industrial civil engineering and machine foundation, as well as design and build. Interclass Surfacing Ltd takes responsibility for industrial and commercial projects that include work on roads and car parks using asphalt and Macadam surfacing.

At any one time across these three companies, Interclass has an average of 20 concurrent project sites managed from its Head Office in Wolverhampton, West Midlands. It is therefore imperative that Interclass has a software system that provides visibility of the status of all these sites. Since the early 1990's, Interclass had been using Multisoft, a Sage product towards the end of its life and one that was struggling to meet business requirements.

With Sage finally withdrawing support on the product and the problems of work duplication that arose from using a separate estimating system, Interclass decided to look for a replacement IT solution that would be fully integrated and offer modern accounting functionality. Don Ward, Interclass' Business Development Director, says, "We wanted a system with a more flexible reporting functionality; with improved methods of data input; that incorporated new developments in technology; that provided contract staff with greater access to project information; and where accounting and project software could be integrated."

"Several systems were considered," says Managing Director David Jones, "but some couldn't provide an integrated, tried and tested subcontract ledger, a module that we view as being essential. Other software resellers didn't have a significant track record within the construction industry. However, intuita's unison construction was different – with a strong background in the construction sector, intuita staff spoke of future developments and available add-on facilities. Unison construction was also seen to have a strong link with a good estimating package and despite many of unison construction's users being major contractors, the cost fitted well with us as an SME company."

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Contact us

T: +44 (0)845 080 4940

F: +44 (0)845 080 4949

W: www.tekton-group.com

E: enquiries@tekton-group.com

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Interclass' various departments were impressed with the demonstrations of unison construction, particularly because of its ease of use. "We liked the navigation functionality and the ability to drill-down and really interrogate the system for project information," says David Jones. "Positive site visits and telephone discussions with Wates Plc, a user of unison construction, reinforced our decision to choose intuita as our software supplier."

Since implementing unison construction, Interclass has been pleased with the flexibility of the system – not only in its reporting tools as requested in Interclass' wish list, but also in the ability to add functionality as and when required. "The nirvana of a paperless office is very appealing," says Don Ward, "so it's good to know that intuita offer document management as one of their value-added modules."

With unison construction, data input has been moved to contract team staff, giving them greater visibility of, control of and access to information such as costs and project-related issues. This, along with the fact that the buying system is now an integral part of the solution, means a massive reduction in the double entry of data, greatly enhancing the efficiency of work processes. Further streamlining of procedures has been achieved in the Accounts Department through the ability to pull information into one source instead of having to constantly crosscheck data, and in Payroll which now directly passes into contract costing.

intuita likes each of their clients to consider them as a business 'Partner' rather than supplier. David Jones couldn't agree more – "intuita's response time is brilliant. We usually get a response to a query within 15-20 minutes so it seems like we have an in-house IT Department. We always feel like we are first in the queue, there never seems to be a list of others to be dealt with and much of the

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time we are put straight through to the person we want to speak with. This is IT support at its best!"

Interclass wishes to continue enhancing their business using unison construction. "We want the software to continue to be our core system so that it is central to client relationship management, document management, estimating, and accounting and management information. We look forward to extending this to each and every one of our contracting sites and also to utilising QS workbench so that professional third parties can view our valuations."

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