

Project DocControl Helps Gunby Construction Avoid Costly Disputes, Increase Productivity and Improve Company Image

Gunby Construction Company

- Georgia-based Division 3 commercial concrete subcontractor
- Works for most of the largest GCs in the Southeast
- Projects tend to be large, complex and high-profile
- Implemented Project DocControl in 2004



BACKGROUND

Gunby Construction Company is a Division 3 commercial concrete subcontractor located in Roswell, Georgia. Founded in 1989, Gunby works for most of the largest general contractors (GCs) in the Southeast and has worked on a number of large, high-profile projects from Louisiana to the Carolinas, including the Maynard Holbrook Jackson Jr. International Terminal at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

THE CHALLENGE

Gunby had grown successfully over the years with a minimal amount of information technology (IT) in place. However, by 2004, Darrell Gunby, the company's vice president, recognized the need to invest in tools, systems and processes that would enable the company to work more efficiently, mitigate risk and cut costs.

"We were tracking things manually and inconsistently," said Gunby. "Our GCs were over-documenting us and we were struggling to produce the necessary documentation to defend our position when questions or disputes came up. In fact, our inability to keep accurate concrete logs and track commitments to concrete was costing us tens of thousands of dollars a year. We had to do something about it."

After seeing how some of the most successful GCs were running their operations, Gunby made the decision to beef up the company's IT infrastructure, putting systems and technology in place. He also brought in IT specialist and project manager Dave Ridarick to help manage this new infrastructure and to develop, implement and manage processes that would allow the company to be more efficient and organized, especially from a project management standpoint.

It soon became apparent to both Gunby and Ridarick that the level of project tracking the company needed was way beyond the scope of what Microsoft Word and Excel could offer. "There's only so much you can do with Word, Excel and three-ring binders," commented Ridarick. "If you really want to be on top of things, using these methods will soak up most of your day. We knew there had to be a better way."

THE SOLUTION

It was then that Gunby's management team set out to evaluate a number of project management solutions that focused on document management. They had heard of Project DocControl, so they began their search with that system. Both Ridarick and Gunby took a hard look at Project DocControl and were

impressed with its capabilities and ease of use. But in the interest of due diligence, they decided to also check out other options.

After evaluating a few more systems, the team chose Project DocControl. "Everything else we looked at was way more than we needed and too complicated," said Ridarick. "It was clear to us that Project DocControl was built for specialty contractors. The system spoke our language and was simple to use. It didn't require us to learn a whole new set of terminology or to develop process workarounds. Plus, it was strictly focused on document control, which is precisely the area we needed help with."

Within days of installation, Gunby began using Project DocControl for generating and tracking all its RFIs, submittals, transmittals, correspondence, change order requests, pay applications and daily reports (which Ridarick uses to upload and track all concrete logs). Ridarick, who is also in charge of assembling the company's bids, even began using the system to put together bid documents, send them out electronically and track their results.

THE RESULT

\$12,000 Savings in One Day

One of the biggest benefits Gunby has realized from using Project DocControl has been the ability to log key project events—including what happened, when, where and who was involved. Because the system makes recording this information easy and practical, users feel compelled to log all important project activities and documents daily. This alone has helped Gunby avoid a number of costly disputes and claims.

Ridarick cited one example where a GC was expecting Gunby to fully cover \$12,000 of extra work Gunby hadn't accounted for in its original bid. Within minutes of digging through Project

DocControl's correspondence log, Ridarick found that the version of the plans on which the general contractor was basing this request had been released one day after Gunby had quoted the project.

"Because everything in our logs is time- and date-stamped, we quickly saw that there was no way we could have included this part of the job in our estimate," said Ridarick. "We were able to easily prove this to the GC and get a change order for the additional work. Before Project DocControl, we wouldn't have had the information to back it up, which means we would have had to eat the \$12,000."

Documenting Projects in Half the Time

Project DocControl has also greatly improved project management productivity at Gunby. Ridarick commented that the project management team can now create and track documentation at least twice as fast and much more accurately and thoroughly. Plus, there's less paper to deal with, since most of the documents can be emailed or faxed directly from the system, and incoming emails and documents can be easily logged into Project DocControl.

Furthermore, because all project information and documents are centralized, no one has trouble finding what they need. When a project manager goes on vacation or is unreachable, whoever fills in for him knows where to find the information he or she needs and where to log the documentation that is generated.

Gunby's pay applications process in particular has been greatly improved as a result of using Project DocControl. The system carries all pay application data from one month to the next. Should a change need to be made to a pay application in a previous cycle, the system updates everything automatically. "We can knock out pay apps at least 50 percent faster,"

said Ridarick. "Plus, they're more accurate now. And the system even allows us to upload our GCs' custom pay apps, which means we don't have to fill them out manually."

The increased productivity has enabled the company to manage projects better and with less staff. It has reduced the need for administrative personnel and allowed Gunby to reassign staff to higher-value areas of the business. "In a tight economy, this flexibility has helped us get more done with fewer resources, which has helped our bottom line," said Ridarick.

Improved Company Image

Finally, Project DocControl has provided Gunby Construction with a greatly improved company image. Having all projects well documented has earned the company the respect of many reputable GCs. According to Ridarick, it has even helped the company win more business and improve client loyalty. "GCs want to work with subcontractors that have their act together," he said. "Sure, price is very important. But at the end of the day, the client wants to feel confident that you run a tight ship and are on top of things. Project DocControl allows us to maintain that level of professionalism."

CONTACT INFORMATION

To learn more about how Project DocControl can help your business succeed, visit us at www.ProjectDocControl.com or call 813.903.9446.

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— Dave Ridarick
Project Manager
Gunby Construction Company

