

## INDUSTRY: Construction

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Our construction client is an integrated construction management and general construction company rooted in strong values typical of family-owned firms. The company has a firm foothold in the Chicago area with projects like the Navy Pier renovation and East West University. No stranger to aggressive growth, they have appeared on Crain's Fast Fifty every year since 2012.

Before engaging 3Points, the Orland Park-based construction company employed outdated servers and an inadequate firewall and VPN access platform that caused constant headaches and frustrations. Systems and computers, patched together at different times, triggered downtime and lost productivity. The mobile extensions of their offices – construction trailers, project managers and satellite offices – were no exception. Like the company's overall technology, these field locations were patched into the system rather than integrated.

The Construction's CFO, likened the company's technology to a puzzle with pieces that just wouldn't fit. "Our IT department at that time would use metaphorical tape to force the pieces of the puzzle to fit together just to make things work," he said. "The process was not easy but 3Points successfully dismantled the existing puzzle, removed the bad pieces (which ended up being 99 percent of them) and put it back together in an efficient manner. We now have a complete picture with no missing or bandaged pieces."

He credits 3Points' deep understanding of the construction business. "Having an IT company that understands construction is paramount to an efficient and effective platform. Construction is a unique animal, and I don't think that just any IT company could effectively manage this business segment without understanding it. There is true value in knowing that we have the right technology for us and the most up-to-date applications."

### Remote Access Platform Unleashes Productivity Potential and Extends the Office Environment to a Mobile Workforce

3Points' implementation of new equipment, proven remote access platform, mobile technology, and ongoing network monitoring has transformed them top to bottom.

"Right now, when a new construction site is launched, we have a seamless integration into our systems," he said. "An employee doesn't even recognize that they are working outside of the home office. We no longer face the regular connectivity issues and access to our business applications; it truly is an extension of our home office." He adds, "The mobile apps that had the most impact on our mobile technology are the mobile Microsoft Office Suite and Procore (construction management software). We are embracing mobile technology, and 3Points is there to support us at every step."

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3Points provides IT services to their main office and all remote job sites and employees. These include hosted servers, data backups, network monitoring, antivirus, helpdesk support, onsite support, project services, and technology audit reviews. By making their network and email more stable, 3Points has helped decrease the risk of failing equipment, dramatically improving uptime and productivity.

### Leading With 360° Visibility

One of the biggest IT initiatives 3Points implemented for them was moving its existing solution to a cloud server. Almost immediately, management gained real-time visibility into their construction business' finances, operations and inventory.

"Migrating our applications to the cloud may have been the best IT decision we have made as a company," he said. "This migration has aided into the seamless integration of our off-site locations, an easier environment for people to work from home or access data on the go, a sense of security that if you lost, forgot or crashed your PC you can still access your data as well as the sense of safety that your data eggs are not in one basket. If our office was to experience a disaster, we can still function efficiently."

As for security, he equates cloud computing with confidence. "As a company we feel more secure with our data in the cloud than in-house," he says. "Initially some employees had concerns but there is no comparison to the superior security of a data center to that of a server closet inside your office. It's like your money. You entrust your funds with your bank because they have security and safety measures you don't have in your house."

He adds, "In this business environment your data is the backbone of your business, you want that information in the safest place possible; you need to trust the holding of those assets with the people and environment that properly knows how to protect those assets. I would not trust a data center or 3Points to work on a construction project, so why should we trust ourselves with the security of our biggest assets? Our data is secure, backed up and always available to those who need it."

### 3Points Raises Productivity Bar for Construction Projects

"3Points' recommendation to put Timberline on the cloud has completely innovated the productivity of our primary business application," he said. "We can access it anytime without a problem, updates are now a non-issue where in the past they were painful. And now the stability of the system has never been so rock solid. Timberline is the cornerstone application of our operations. When that is not running efficiently we are not running efficiently. Moving Timberline to the cloud has created dramatic efficiencies in our business that we did not know could exist. Timberline complaints from staff went from a daily occurrence to non-existent."

Like many construction companies focused on the day-to-day rigors of keeping clients happy, meeting deadlines, doing great work and managing people, technology is not an easy component to embrace. Yet, he says that IT has impacted just about every sector of his business. The big deliverable is productivity. "Our partnership with 3Points has improved productivity beyond measure. The time we lost with IT problems, the money spent on attempting to Band-Aid those problems, the problems trying to access data outside of the home office as well as the slow speed of our systems are virtually non-existent," he says.

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They did not, however, realize all this from day one. It took time. Most construction contractors are not racing to invest in technology, especially when it's not wholly broken. The wait, though, according to him, is a risk.

"To be completely honest we did not realize immediately that 3Points was going to make a difference. It is a relationship, we had to learn about each other and we also had apprehensions about some of the suggestions," he said.

He adds, "We are a construction company, not an IT company. Little by little their recommendations made impacts on our business, but the old technology platforms that were still in place prohibited maximum impact of 3Points' value. When we made the decision to further implement more of 3Points' suggestions, the light bulb went off, we got it. At that time we realized we chose the right partner and wished we would have moved faster on all of their recommendations. Again, they are now a partner, not just a provider."

### Finding the "Right-Fit" Technology Partner

Oftentimes, for small businesses, the responsibility for technology falls on the CFO's shoulders. They are no exception. He has worked with both in-house IT experts and "one-man band" consultancies. According to him, both lack the "diversity a team of experts can provide."

He says, "You need a team of people who are constantly researching the newest and best waves of technology. Knowing that 3Points has a diverse team with multiple backgrounds that pull together to fit you with the right solution is comforting as a business operator. This was the best decision we made as a company in terms of technology."

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