Built to Last, Built to Lead

A strong foundation of customers, employees and partners has Computer Guidance Corporation looking back on almost four decades of success and into the future as the cloud-based construction ERP industry leader

This month, we had the pleasure of sitting down with Mike Bihlmeier, President of Computer Guidance Corporation, to get an inside perspective on what has driven his organization to the pinnacle of the construction ERP software industry. Their customers are raving about them, their product is in high demand, and their future growth looks to be as explosive as the path that got them here. Let's find out why.

Q Computer Guidance Corporation has been selling construction ERP software for decades and shows no signs of slowing down. How has the company been able to remain a leader for so long?

A: We are proud of our legacy and our position as an industry leader. But since our start in 1981, there have been days that have been less than stellar. A review of our past reveals that our most successful times have been when we have kept our focus on three things; our customers, employees and partners. We are very fortunate to have built our organization's foundation on the loyalty of our customers, the hard work and dedication of our employees and the strength of our partners. Much of each of these groups have been with us since our earliest days and are not shy to point out when we may be slipping. Without them, I am not sure where we'd be today, and with them we have formed a culture committed to keeping our foundation strong in order to support continued growth.

Q CGC has been creating a lot of noise in the market. Every week, there seems to be multiple construction companies purchasing, going live, and announcing realized gains from your solutions. How is CGC able to manage all of this activity?

A: Yes, we are in a great position today. We have the leading product, embraced by large and loyal customers, and supported by superb employees and prodigious ownership. It is a true reflection of our foundation; customers, employees and partners that support and propel our growth. I cannot say enough about our team, especially when tasked with managing our implementations. It is not uncommon for them to support multiple installs and successful go-lives in a single week, and they have been doing so for years. It is not easy. My job is to stay out of the way and leave it to our team of professionals.
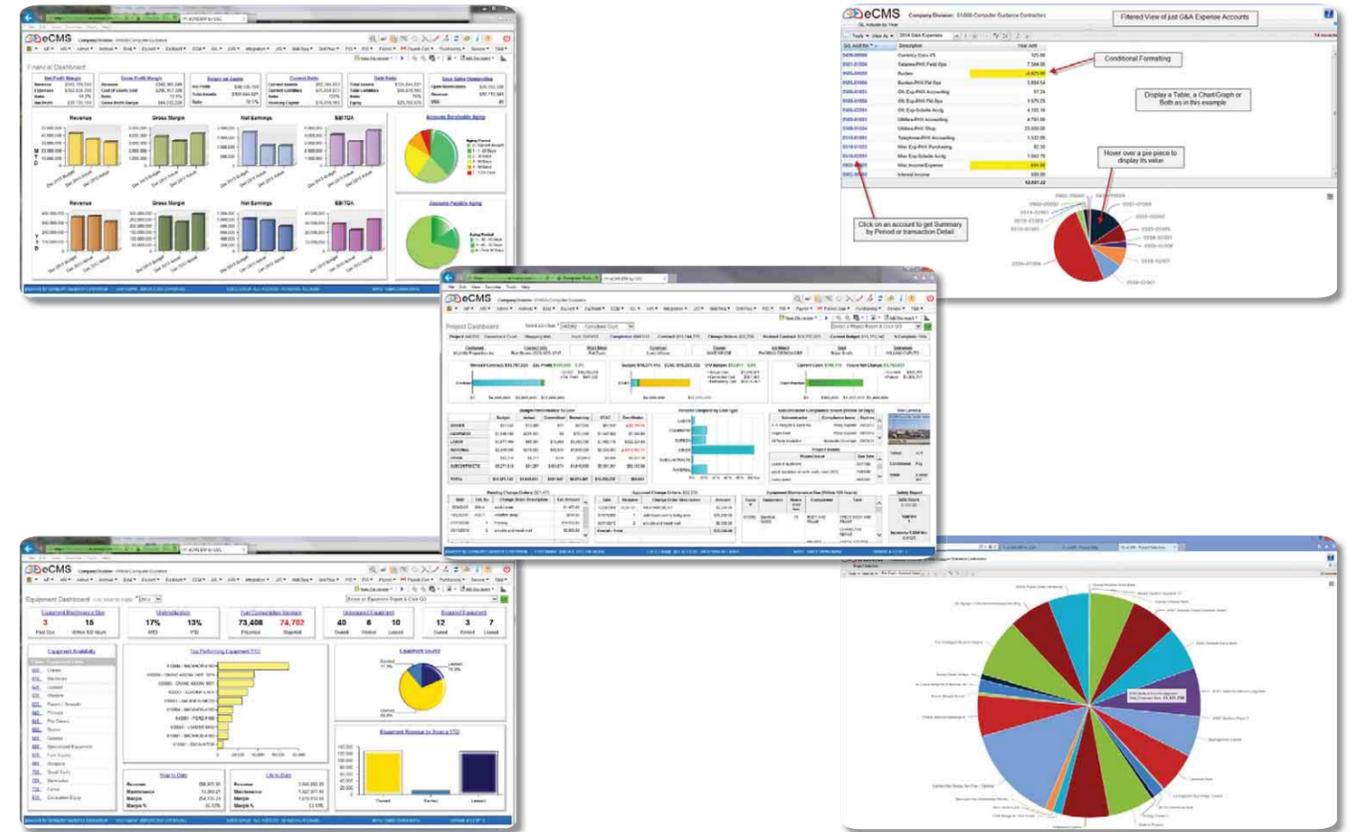
Q Technology is constantly changing. How has CGC been able to adapt and keep up with the demand for new technologies?

A: Our ability to introduce new technologies to the industry has been one of our greatest competitive advantages. From spending time in IBM Labs in Rochester to attracting the most forward-looking clients and employees, we are constantly pushing forward and being led forward, which has resulted in several notable accomplishments. We were one of the first offerings to be 100% browser-based. We were also the first, and have the largest client-base, currently operating construction ERP in the cloud. We are the only ERP vendor to offer any and all of Gartner's top three ranked business intelligence and analytics solutions. And, we are the only vendor authorized to offer its clients the world's fastest DB2 SQL platform that is also utilized by the top 59 banks in the world, 23 out of the top 25 retailers, and 9 out of top 10 insurance providers. Our clients look to CGC to help sniff out strategic technologies and more importantly to help maintain our clients' competitive advantages – a role we happily share with our partners.

Q What technologies should construction companies be embracing and implementing today?

A: Each construction company is different but the reason our customers outperform most others is due to their ability to understand and leverage their data. It starts with recognizing the role data plays in growth. Companies can improve their decision-making by improving data accessibility for their employees. After companies see the difference informed decisions have on the bottom line, the ability to get the right information to the right people at the right time becomes an obsession. Therefore, it is obviously advantageous to select an ERP vendor with a browser-based platform that provides access anytime, anywhere, and strong mobile applications to connect field employees with leading business intelligence to transform data into meaningful and useful information. To take it to the next level, most of our clients also migrate to the cloud.

Q Tell me about your product development strategy. How does CGC determine what projects to take on next?

A: Ultimately, projects are customer-driven and stay true to both our specific target market and core competencies. One out of every five CGC clients is represented on top ENR lists, which is the industry's largest ratio. Some of the largest construction companies in the world also sit on our Advisory Board and offer their continuous guidance. Additionally, we are very tight with organizations such as the AGC and its leaders. When you have industry leaders advising you on exactly what they need to stay at the top of their game, it becomes simpler to make decisions. Most of the time we will develop these projects but we are not afraid to also look to our partners and sister companies to help augment our reach and fill any gaps. We are fortunate to have constructed a large partner ecosystem that accelerates time-to-market, improves ROI, and enhances the customer experience.

Q Computer Guidance recently became part of the JDM Technology Group of companies. How has life changed?

A: We joined JDM Technology Group in January 2014 and the entire experience has been nothing but positive. We are now part of a global software powerhouse that serves 45,000 users across 40 countries and 6 continents. We have gained new knowledge and tools and an expanded support system. It is not uncommon, for example, to now reach out to our friends in the United Kingdom to seek advice on a challenging issue or to offer advice to our counterparts in Australia. We have enjoyed a collaborative development environment with our sister companies and we each are able to bring new applications and tools to market much more quickly. For example, we recently provided clients with a powerful new data mining tool, Interactive Data Inquiry (IDI), which would have taken years to create on our own. It is truly exciting as we have several more applications and tools under joint development that are scheduled for release this year, including Service Management, Project Management, and additional mobile applications.

The marketplace will continue to hear a lot from Computer Guidance as our clients receive some very innovative solutions focusing on data, workflows and accessibility. There is much more to do for the construction industry and we welcome this challenge, striving to be the best at what we do so our clients can be the best at what they do.

COMPUTER GUIDANCE CORPORATION