

Customer Case Study: Kitchell Corporation



Kitchell Uses Prolog® Software to Improve Collaboration, Owner Oversight and Risk Management on US\$100M Fast-Track Hospital Project

Founded in 1950, Kitchell Corporation is a privately held, employee-owned general contracting, construction management and real estate development company with over US\$354M in annual revenues. Kitchell is headquartered in Phoenix, AZ, has additional offices throughout California and is licensed in 13 states. The company applies innovative approaches to quality assurance, safety, value engineering, environmental protection and other industry-leading practices to a wide range of construction and program management projects in the hospitality, healthcare, corrections, utility, renewable energy, retail, performing arts and academic markets.

Kitchell has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Arizona Real Estate and Development Award (RED Award), the Valley Forward Association's Award of Merit, the Blue Sky Award for Environmental Excellence from Maricopa County's Air Quality Department and the Golden Trowel Award from Phoenix Children's Hospital. The company is ranked #187 on the Engineering News Record (ENR) 2011 Top 400 Contractors list and #42 on the ENR 2011 Top 50 Program Management Firms list. In addition, Kitchell is recognized by Modern Healthcare as the 14th largest healthcare builder and by the Arizona Corporate Excellence Awards as the state's 6th largest private company.

Standardizing Project Management with Prolog Software

Kitchell has a long history of using Prolog software from Meridian Systems. More than 10 years ago, the company purchased Prolog Manager and standardized their project management processes using the software. In addition, an internal Kitchell committee has spent a considerable amount of time customizing the Prolog Manager data entry screens, reports and nomenclature to meet the company's specific needs. "When we were initially evaluating software," recalls Business Analyst, Ed Costanza, "we realized that many systems on the market were cobbled together using different pieces of technology. A system like that is risky because if one piece fails, it can take down your entire program. We liked that Prolog Manager was developed in-house by Meridian as one application."

For years, when a collaborative project environment was required, Kitchell also used ProjectTalk, Meridian's full-featured, Internet-based project management solution that is powered by Prolog and available by subscription. However, as the complexity of projects increased, Kitchell decided it was time to explore additional project management solutions. "The demand for collaboration, accountability and quick distribution of information drove us to review our options for achieving a long-term integrated project management platform," explains Senior Project Engineer, Brian

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*Naveed Saboonchi, IT Manager
Kitchell Corporation*

Bowers. "We needed technology that would help our project teams now - and many years down the road."

Prolog Converge: A Logical Choice for Collaboration

At that time, Meridian had just introduced Prolog Converge, a flexible Web-based project management application that improves collaboration and shares the Prolog Manager database. Although Kitchell was impressed with Prolog Converge, as part of their due diligence, they first tried a system that competes with Meridian's Prolog applications. "We ran that system for about a year on one project, but soon realized that it wasn't the right solution for us," explains IT Manager, Naveed Saboonchi. "The complex screens weren't designed with a project manager in mind and it took 10 steps to complete a task that could be done in four steps or less with Prolog Manager. In addition, the collaboration piece wasn't as strong or as user-friendly as Prolog Converge."

In May of 2010, after reaffirming that Prolog Manager was the best project management platform for Kitchell, they purchased Prolog Converge and hired Meridian Independent Software Vendor (ISV) partner, Dimension 5 Solutions, Inc., to configure the application and provide training services. "As satisfied Prolog software users, Prolog Converge really was the logical choice for us," Bowers says. "Since it integrates with Prolog Manager and shares a centralized database, there was no need for data migration." This allowed for a fast, almost turnkey implementation that brought Kitchell's Prolog Manager customizations into Prolog Converge. And, since the company's internal and external project team members were familiar with Prolog Manager, the learning curve was minimized.

KCI Puts Prolog Converge to the Test

Within the Kitchell family of companies, KCI is a general contracting firm that currently has 11 projects in process with a combined total cost of nearly US\$1.3B. One of those projects is the Scott & White Hospital located in College Station, Texas. The US\$100M, fast-track project, which requires strong collaboration between KCI, the trade contractors and the designers, was a perfect candidate for Prolog Converge and would rigorously test the collaborative features of the software.

"From an IT standpoint," says Saboonchi, "it was really straight forward to implement Prolog Converge on the project, even though the client wanted a number of minor customizations, such as header and footer disclosures and specific routing sequences for

notifications." Other customizations included roles-based screen modifications to streamline the way information was presented to different users.

In February of 2011, KCI began using Prolog Manager and Prolog Converge on the Scott & White Hospital project. Four months later, structural construction began while the design work continued. At that point, KCI's Prolog solution was being used by project managers and field staff; cost, project and field engineers; and project directors. In total, 14 employees were using Prolog Manager to manage the project and 15 collaborative users were accessing Prolog Converge. During this critical time in the project, Prolog Converge enhanced communication around the submittal process, expedited the processing of requests-for-information (RFIs) and improved the exchange of information in a very dynamic project environment.

Improving Collaboration on a Fast-Track Project

To illustrate how Prolog Converge improves collaboration, consider how KCI managed RFIs and submittals before having this tool in place. On previous projects, an RFI would be entered in Prolog Manager, saved as a PDF file and e-mailed to the appropriate team members where it might sit, unnoticed, in the recipients' inboxes. Comments like, "I don't remember getting that. Can you resend it?" were common, which created extra work for KCI and delayed resolution of the RFI. Similarly, submittal packages would be logged in Prolog Manager and routed manually for review.

In Prolog Converge, automatic e-mail notifications have replaced manual distributions. "When Brian enters an RFI or submittal," Saboonchi says, "the project team is automatically notified by e-mail that an action needs to be taken." The notification includes a summary of the RFI or submittal and a link in the e-mail launches Prolog Converge where the details and associated documents can be reviewed and a response can be made.

Kitchell is using the document management system (DMS) in Prolog Converge to create a centralized document repository to store and share all project documents electronically, such as drawings and revisions. "We're trying to go as digital as possible on this project because documents are issued in bundles," Bowers says. "The submittals alone can have extremely large file sizes, so housing them in Prolog Converge means that we don't have to worry

Meridian Partner Profile

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about exceeding e-mail size limits." Saboonchi agrees, adding: "Having a centralized document repository also eliminates confusion around version control. The most current version of a document is always available in Prolog Converge."

Increasing Accountability and Decreasing Risk

Although the Scott & White Hospital project won't be completed until April 2013, Prolog Converge is already delivering on its promise of improved collaboration "As a collaborative tool, Prolog Converge is designed to make tasks like answering RFIs quicker," Saboonchi says. It is also keeping the owner informed on the project's progress.

Having information that is both accessible and transparent has led to greater accountability among the project's subcontractors - and less risk for KCI. "Excuses like 'I never received that' aren't holding up progress on the job," Bowers states.

As the project continues, KCI anticipates further benefits from Prolog Converge. "We've been very happy with Prolog Manager,"

Costanza says, "and we like the direction that Meridian is heading with Prolog Converge."

Anytime, Anywhere Information Access

In today's construction market, many project owners are demanding anytime, anywhere access to information. For Kitchell, using Prolog Converge with Prolog Manager is helping them meet - and exceed - that demand. "Hosting Prolog Converge in-house gives us complete control over the tool, which provides a lot of value to us and our clients," Saboonchi says.

As a member of Meridian's Prolog Customer Advisory Panel (CAP), Costanza appreciates the software development firm's outreach approach to product development. "Meridian's willingness to use customer feedback to implement solutions that satisfy the ever-changing needs of the construction industry is pretty progressive," he states. "We look forward to a continued relationship with Meridian and benefitting from future Prolog software developments."



Kitchell Corporation Project Profile

Scott & White Hospital in College Station, Texas

Kitchell is building a new acute care hospital in College Station, Texas for Scott & White Healthcare, the largest multi-specialty practice in Texas and one of the nation's largest multi-specialty group practice systems. Scott & White Hospital-College Station will house an emergency department, cardiac services, neonatal intensive care unit, comprehensive cancer services, operating rooms, maternity services suites, endoscopic procedure suites, interoperative robotics and other specialty services, all supported by a pharmacy, comprehensive state-of-the-art imaging technology and other diagnostic capabilities.

Key Project Elements

- › Construction of a 320,000 SF, five-story, 119-bed acute care hospital
- › 97-acre Greenfield project site
- › Onsite wet pond designed to service partial onsite irrigation

Estimated Cost: US\$100M



Architect/Engineer: Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc.

Scheduled Completion Date: Summer 2013

Anticipated Results: Scott & White Hospital-College Station will initially have 119 beds and can be expanded to accommodate another 24 beds when the need arises. The new hospital will support Scott & White Healthcare's model of providing a seamless continuum between inpatient and outpatient services, while providing effective, cost-efficient and high quality healthcare services to the College Station area.



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