

## Customer Case Study: Catalyst Construction Group



### Construction Management Startup Uses Prolog® Software to Standardize Processes, Increase Efficiency and Win More Work

Catalyst Construction Group is a general contracting and construction management firm based in Chicago, IL. Its knowledgeable project team is experienced in all phases of the construction process and focuses on effective communication and the importance of completing projects on time. The company provides a broad range of construction services, from commercial and residential construction to renovations and land development.



When experienced Project Executives Mike Pinelli and Chad McRoberts founded Catalyst Construction Group, they knew that project management software would be an important tool for handling the work volume generated by their growing startup organization. With \$6M in revenues for 2006 and a \$10M backlog for 2007, Catalyst needed a way to manage six or eight large projects with a shoestring staff.

Although they launched their business using spreadsheets to manage project details, Pinelli and McRoberts immediately began researching project management software to replace this rudimentary system. Two main challenges needed to be addressed by a new solution. As construction managers, tracking project documentation was the highest priority. In addition, ease-of-use was imperative in terms of productivity.

At a former company, Pinelli had been an administrator of Primavera Expedition while McRoberts had been a Meridian Systems Prolog® Manager user. Although they evaluated these and other solutions, in the end they determined that Prolog Manager with Prolog® WebSite would best meet Catalyst's needs.

"Prolog was definitely the most cost-effective means for achieving our goals without becoming a slave to the technology," explains Pinelli. "That was one of our concerns; we didn't want to make this investment and be totally chained down to it. We wanted to customize the use for our projects and we found that in Prolog."

Because most of Catalyst's field staff were already familiar with Prolog, the learning curve was minimal. This, says Pinelli, created an "effortless" implementation and rollout of the new software. After entering historical data for active jobs, the construction management team was ready to put Prolog to work.

In less than six months they were utilizing most of the functionality offered by Prolog, including the use of Prolog WebSite to create RFI's and daily reports from the field. And the company's original objectives had been met by the ability to easily create and track project documents such as contracts, submittals, change orders and meeting minutes.

Custom reports let Pinelli and McRoberts

know, at any given moment, whose court the ball is in and what task is the next priority. "Prolog helps us maintain the critical path of the project," states Pinelli. "And from the administrative side," adds McRoberts, "we can track things like insurance certificates to remain in compliance."

### Standardizing on Prolog Promotes Better Decision Making

Using Prolog to standardize project management processes has given Catalyst the ability to handle multiple complex projects and provide a responsiveness not always seen with larger construction management organizations.

"Prolog makes us more efficient with our time management," explains McRoberts. "It also standardizes the processes that our employees use, which increases productivity. If one employee is gone and another has to step in and manage a job, he can go into Prolog and quickly get up-to-speed on what's going on with the project."

Pinelli concurs. "By standardizing on Prolog software, we have the ability to quickly access project information to make more effective decisions. This visibility reduces the risk of cost overruns and demonstrates to our clients that we're on top of things."

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*Mike Pinelli, Project Executive  
Catalyst Construction Group*

### E-Mail Integration Improves Communication, Reduces Costs

By integrating Prolog with their e-mail system, Pinelli and McRoberts have improved communication and built stronger relationships with their subcontractors. "In our business," states Pinelli, "the timeliness of information is very critical. We've integrated Prolog with our e-mail system to expedite responses for RFI's and submittals."

The efficiency this delivers, says McRoberts, extends beyond Catalyst to the subcontractor level. "The ability to respond quickly to our subcontractors helps them become more efficient in the field. This contributes to their profitability, which makes them want to work for us in the future."

And, Pinelli adds, there is a positive cost impact from this integration. "By communicating electronically, we also reduce our costs because we're not chopping down a forest in terms of paper. With Prolog, we don't need paper copies of everything."

### A Successful Startup Wins More Work

From an owners' perspective, Pinelli and McRoberts have used Prolog to realize benefits beyond the basics. Managing multiple projects from a single database allows their staff to handle larger projects more efficiently. Ramp-up time for new employees is faster because there are standardized processes in place using a single software solution. And perhaps most importantly, Prolog helps Catalyst win more work.

"Prolog's effectiveness as a project management solution has been critical to us from a successful startup perspective," explains Pinelli. "There is a specific example where we were competing for a large condo project and the owner wanted to see how we compared with the bigger contractors. We brought samples of our meeting minutes, submittal logs and our other standard documentation to the table. Prolog helped us win the project."

### Value in an Evolving Product

As an experienced Prolog user, McRoberts applauds Meridian for evolving the product as the construction industry changes. "Prolog is a comprehensive project management tool that lends itself well to the individual user's needs and wants. That's the value I see in the system and why we selected Prolog."

## Catalyst Construction Group Project Profile

### Kedzie Square in Chicago, IL

Kedzie Square is a 28-unit eco-friendly condominium complex located in the heart of Chicago's historic Logan Square. With a 36,000 square foot footprint and a one-to-one parking ratio, Kedzie Square is prime real estate. The unique, quadrangle building design leaves room for an open courtyard in the middle of the complex. Entrances into the building are through a barrel ceiling area to allow maximum light into the courtyard and common stair areas.

#### Key Project Elements

- › The site sits on four lots equaling 28,000 square feet
- › The building is a low rise residential three-story consisting of 28 units (including four handicap-accessible units) totaling 36,000 square feet
- › Unit features include soaring ceilings, city views, hardwood floors, stainless steel appliances, granite countertops and open floor plans
- › Two ramps will allow handicap access to the building
- › The environmentally friendly construction is mixed, with burnished block, brick, plaster and block and brick veneer

**Original Contract Value:** \$5.4 million

**Estimated Completion Date:** August 2007

**Anticipated Results:** Kedzie Square is expected to be a true asset to the evolving Logan Square community.



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