

Customer Case Study: The Weitz Company



Standardizing on Prolog® Software Helps The Weitz Company Control Costs, Reduce Risk and Increase Profit

Founded in 1855, The Weitz Company is the oldest construction firm west of the Mississippi. A general contractor, design-builder and construction manager, Weitz is based in Des Moines, Iowa and has additional operations in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas and Nebraska. The company, which is recognized as the leader in senior living community construction, builds a broad range of projects, from industrial facilities and golf courses to biotech research facilities and hospitality venues. Weitz consistently ranks among the nation's leading contractors; its 2006 revenues will approach \$1.5B. The company is #36 on ENR's 2006 Top 400 Contractors list and #16 on ENR's 2006 Top 100 CM-at-Risk firms.



For The Weitz Company, change has been an integral part of success. Since its humble beginnings as a small carpentry shop more than 150 years ago, Weitz has evolved into one of the largest construction firms in the U.S with approximately 2,000 employees and operations across the country. In more recent years, automated project management has been a key ingredient in the company's continued success, which includes more than 21 consecutive years of profitability – a rare benchmark in the construction business.

Growth means greater revenues. But it also means greater costs. By the mid 1990's, Weitz had clearly outgrown the capabilities its in-house cost management system called COLT (Change Order Logging and Tracking). To manage the risk and avoid the surprises relating to change orders, Weitz needed a sophisticated project management system to deploy across its geographically dispersed operations. So the firm set out to find a replacement for COLT.

In 1997, Weitz chose Prolog Manager from Meridian Systems to manage its projects. At that time, the market offered only a handful of project management applications for construction companies of its size. "Prolog's superior ability to manage and control costs differentiated it from the competition," explains Mark Federle, Weitz's Chief Information Officer (CIO).

Centralized Data Collection Reduces Change Order Risk

With Prolog's centralized data collection, Weitz was soon able to achieve real-time status reports on change orders and identify whether client billings reflected those changes, something the company had difficulty determining with its previous project management system.

When the company issues a change order to a subcontractor, it now knows if an equivalent change order has been

signed by the project's owner. "Prolog provides a control mechanism to manage this risk," says Federle, "and allows us to keep the costs of the project in sync with the revenues of the project."

In addition, integration between Prolog and Weitz's JD Edwards enterprise resource planning (ERP) software from Oracle means that costs entered into Prolog automatically update the JD Edwards system. This integration eliminates the redundant data entry previously needed to enter information into the company's accounting and job cost system.

While Prolog helps facilitate successful projects, it also alerts managers to internal issues that hinder profitability. "We're able to use our Prolog data to evaluate trends and see where and why change orders are happening," Federle explains. "For example, we can figure out if there is a problem with how we're writing our contracts, if we need to change our subcontract agreement or if our employees simply need more training."

"There is a significant advantage to using the industry leading project management system. We can go to an owner and explain why our standardization on Prolog is of benefit to them. Prolog allows us to build better, faster and cheaper."

Mark Federle, CIO
The Weitz Company

Standardized Project Management: Beyond Cost Control

Although cost control was the driving factor for Weitz's implementation of Prolog, the software has become a standardized tool across the organization for all facets of project management and delivery. Superintending tasks such as daily log and journal entries and engineering functions such as RFI communications and submittal tracking are just some examples.

Quick access to logs, forms and reports keep projects on track and offer a significant efficiency improvement over the previous word processing files and spreadsheets that were scattered around the company's various offices.

Because documents are now stored in Prolog, everyone on the project team has access to them, regardless of their location. Plus, all documents now support the Weitz brand.

"With Prolog," explains Federle, "we have been able to create a standard look to our information. Our submittal log is the same whether you work for Weitz in Florida or Weitz in Arizona. By standardizing on Prolog, our clients know they are hiring *The Weitz Company* – no matter what part of the country they are in."

Internal reporting formats are also standardized across the company's geographic footprint and 760 Prolog users. "By having centralized databases in Prolog," says Federle, "we have a much greater ability to meet the demand for information from our operations staff across all business units."

With the addition of Prolog® WebSite, an application that provides Web-based collaboration capabilities and integrates with Prolog Manager, Weitz also delivers information to its extended project team. Currently used as an external communication tool, Prolog WebSite electronically shares details such as meeting minutes with project owners and designers.

Building Better, Faster, Cheaper

"Without Prolog," states Federle, "The Weitz Company wouldn't be as big or as profitable as it is today." Implementation of Prolog has helped Weitz build on an already established reputation of excellence by providing a richly detailed database of project information that assists clients in understanding the scope and costs of a proposed project.

"There is a significant advantage to using the industry leading project management system," concludes Federle. "We can go to an owner and explain why our standardization on Prolog is of benefit to them. Prolog allows us to build better, faster and cheaper."



The Weitz Company Project Profile

Wells Fargo Arena

Iowa Events Center, Des Moines, Iowa

The Weitz Company provided preconstruction and construction services for this joint venture with Turner Construction. The Wells Fargo Arena seats 17,200 and was constructed using an open design to provide outstanding sight lines from every seat, great views from the concourses and views of scenic downtown Des Moines.

The Iowa Events Center has skywalk connection from the Arena to Hy-Vee Hall, a 234,000 square foot exhibition hall with multi-functional space, food preparation areas, storage, loading docks and other services.

Facility Type: Public, Recreational Facility

Owner: Polk County, Des Moines, IA

Architects: HOK Sport + Venue + Entertainment, Kansas City, MO

Size: 430,000 square feet

Key Project Elements

- › 17,200 seats
- › Features suites, loge boxes and club seats
- › Includes ice arena with professional quality locker and dressing rooms
- › Offers gift shop, food and beverage concessions and other services needed to host large events

Results

The Wells Fargo Arena opened in July 2005 and is the permanent home of the Iowa Stars hockey organization, the top-level affiliate of the NHL's Dallas Stars. This unique venue hosts a variety of sports and other entertainment events throughout the year, including the annual State Wrestling, Boys' State Basketball and Girls' State Basketball Tournaments each spring and a variety of music concerts.



1720 Prairie City Road
Suite 120
Folsom, California 95630
USA

(916) 294 2000
(916) 294 2001 fax
(800) 850 2660
www.meridiansystems.com
sales@meridiansystems.com

© Copyright 2007 Meridian Systems. All rights reserved. Prolog, Proliance, Meridian Systems and ProjectTalk are registered trademarks of Meridian Systems, an independent subsidiary of Trimble, in the United States and other countries. The names and logos of other companies mentioned herein may be trademarks of their respective owners. This document is for informational purposes only. Meridian Systems makes no warranties, expressed or implied, in this document. MSS-1045-0706-0000