

Customer Case Study

Alberici Corporation



Alberici Corporation Uses Prolog® Software to Achieve Greater Efficiencies, Market-Specific Standardization and Real-Time Project Controls

Founded in 1918 as a small contracting firm, Alberici Corporation is now a family of enterprises that offer construction and construction-related services to a variety of industries around the world. With a LEED® Platinum-certified headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, Alberici also has offices in the Great Lakes and Southeast regions of the U.S. with additional operations in Canada and Mexico. Markets served by Alberici include the automotive, energy, healthcare, industrial, manufacturing and water/wastewater industries. Construction management, design-build, general contracting, preconstruction, sustainability and Lean construction are just some of the services offered by this diverse company. Alberici has received numerous awards and recognitions for its people, projects and safety and service orientation. The firm is ranked #55 on ENR's 2007 Top 400 Contractors list and #127 on its 2007 Top 225 International Contractors list.

When Alberici purchased Prolog Manager from Meridian Systems in 2000, the software was never fully implemented across the enterprise. At that time, standardized project management was not mandated so employees continued to use favorite standbys because they were not being pushed to change. Although some divisions used Prolog to a greater degree, other divisions primarily used word processing documents and spreadsheets along with the firm's construction accounting software.

Five years later, however, the use of Prolog was revisited. Alberici now had billion dollar annual revenues and a greater need for project controls. The company as a whole needed to focus on a system that would deliver a broader understanding of project health while providing an easy way to collaborate with partners such as subcontractors and project owners. Re-evaluation of Prolog revealed strong market share and significant product maturity. In addition, Prolog WebSite, a Web-based project collaboration application, was now available. With Prolog WebSite, Prolog Manager functionality would now be available to Alberici's extended project team from any Internet connection.

Alberici purchased the latest version of Prolog as well as Prolog WebSite. To ensure company-wide utilization, the company chose Byrne Software Technologies, an authorized Meridian Systems Integrator (SI), to help with implementation and training. "Byrne has been on-site since day one of our implementation," says Brooks Williams, Alberici's Director of Project Controls. "They understand the software, the industry and how different systems work together. They've provided us with training resources, assisted in report customization and helped us take our Prolog usage to the next level."

In January 2006, Alberici began using Prolog for all new projects. Existing projects were completed using the old system and new projects were rolled out using Prolog. "This made the implementation really simple," Williams explains, "because we only dealt with one project team at a time – maybe five or six people – and many of them were already familiar with Prolog."

"Prolog WebSite drastically shortens the RFI process by making it possible to complete an RFI in a number of hours instead of a couple of days."

*Brooks Williams
Director of Project Controls
Alberici Corporation*

One of Alberici's first goals with Prolog was to achieve accurate budget monitoring to capture cost changes at their earliest possible stage. "This would eliminate surprises," says Williams. Generating all subcontracts and purchase orders out of Prolog was the highest priority. Document control (including RFIs and Submittals), contract management, change order management and basic field reporting were implemented next.

Real-Time Project Controls

Today the company is managing 85-90 percent of all projects in Prolog and has 125 trained users. Project management processes have been standardized, which increases efficiency and allows staff to move easily from project to project. Electronically managing paper flow has created a central data repository while reducing mailing and courier expenses. And most importantly, Alberici's highest priority, accurate budget monitoring, has been achieved.

"Prolog's Potential Change Order module allows us to log anything that might result in a cost change – regardless of whether we end up doing the work or not. This gives us an accurate picture of our job costs on a daily basis," Williams states. "With an accounting system, you typically get a report that tells you what happened on a project last week. With Prolog, we get a report that tells us what happened five minutes ago. Real-time budget monitoring is a really big benefit."

Prolog WebSite Increases Field Efficiency

With offices and job sites spread around the country and beyond, Prolog WebSite has been a very useful communication and collaboration tool for Alberici. On some projects, the entire RFI process is managed electronically using the Web-based program. This expedites communication by eliminating the time needed to send paper back and forth.

Williams explains: "This also increases efficiency because, with a paper-based RFI system, a form is manually generated, logged, routed and tracked. With Prolog WebSite, a user logs on through the Internet, types in the information and clicks a button to send the RFI. And the recipient is immediately notified by e-mail that a response is needed. Prolog WebSite drastically shortens the RFI process by making it possible to complete an RFI in a number of hours instead of a couple of days. In addition, it provides greater accountability because the program tracks who has what and when."

Document Management is another Prolog WebSite feature used extensively by Alberici. Having a central data repository where documents like shop drawings and photos can be stored and accessed electronically has been very beneficial when questions arise on the job site. "When a job site makes significant use of the Document Management module," says Williams, "the entire project team knows where to find the latest drawings, the most recent site photos, current submittals and so forth. People have access to the information they need – as soon as they need it."

Field reporting has also been streamlined by Prolog WebSite. Daily reports are entered directly into Prolog by the subcontractors. This creates less work for the Alberici field offices. "Overall," states Williams, "Prolog WebSite makes our field staff much more efficient."

Market-Specific Standardization

In addition to standardizing project management processes across the organization, Prolog's flexibility allows Alberici to also address market-specific needs. "Every market Alberici serves has different business requirements," explains Williams. "Prolog gives us the ability to customize our processes for a particular market."

The automotive industry is a good example, he says. For certain clients in this market, a project might award 75 percent of the budget up front and hold back 25 percent for what's called value analysis. At the end of the project, some portion of that 25% is awarded.

"With our old project management system," says Williams, "we were having a difficult time tracking this. In reality, a \$2M contract might only be worth \$1.5M. The other \$500K was possible revenue, but not a sure thing. The problem was, people were creating budget projections using the \$2M figure. With Prolog, we've come up with a system where the value analysis changes are shown separately in the budget reports. Now the revenue isn't taken before it's actually realized."

Meridian Partner Profile

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Although the way Prolog is utilized varies from industry to industry, reporting does not. "We've standardized reporting so that no matter what project you're looking at, the data is represented in a familiar format," says Williams. "This allows us to move people seamlessly between market segments because an RFI report looks the same whether it's for a healthcare facility or a manufacturing plant. Standardized reporting makes it easy to interpret data from different market segments in a common way."

Gaining a Competitive Advantage

Overall, Alberici is extremely pleased with its results from Prolog and Prolog WebSite. "Prolog gives us an overview of a project's health and allows us to track every detail in a consistent and efficient way," concludes Williams. "It's a great project management solution and a useful tool for gaining a competitive advantage. When we talk to potential clients, we let them know that we have a standardized system in place for project management. This helps inspire confidence in the project owner that we've got everything under control."



Alberici Corporation Project Profile

New Replacement Hospital for SSM Healthcare – St. Clare Health Center in Fenton, Missouri

Alberici Healthcare Constructors was selected as the construction manager-at-risk for SSM Health Care's St. Clare Health Center project. The unique 54-acre site will feature many park-like amenities. The 158-bed hospital unmistakably puts patient care first and foremost. By incorporating four "patient experience zones" (Emergency, Outpatient Services, Inpatient Care and Surgical/Specialty Services) into the layout and design, St. Clare Health Center will provide patients with easy access to the specific area needed for each visit.

Architect/Engineer: HGA

Key Project Elements

- › 430,000 square foot facility constructed on 54-acre campus with park-like amenities
- › Full service, 158-bed hospital with latest clinical technology and information systems
- › 24-hour emergency department
- › Comprehensive medical/surgical services
- › Outpatient care center with diagnostic services and medical offices

Contract Amount: \$146M

Alberici Enterprise: Alberici Healthcare Constructors

Start Date: June 2006

Completion Date: September 2008

Anticipated Results The \$126M healthcare campus represents a significant change in SSM's design and construction philosophy. Unlike a traditional selection process, SSM sought partners that were willing to break out of the norm by contributing new and better ways to deliver a healthcare project. Alberici's selection as construction manager was due, in large part, to its success at other SSM facilities, but also for its ability to provide innovative ideas and solutions throughout the project lifecycle.



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