

Sage Estimating sets the standard at CH2M HILL

Accuracy and consistency build competitive advantage



CH2M HILL has over 26,000 employees on six continents working on some of the most complex and exciting projects on the planet. As a global leader in consulting, design, design-build, operations, and program management, CH2M HILL has the human and technical resources, the international footprint, and the depth of know-how and experience to help its clients achieve success in any corner of the world.

Standardizing an approach to project estimating across such a large and diverse organization might have been a struggle, but years ago CH2M HILL placed its trust in Sage Estimating, a solution that now helps maintain the high-quality, thorough, and consistent estimates the company is known for.

Maintain consistent level of quality

“Consistency is the single biggest benefit we gain from Sage Estimating,” says Greg Tipton, estimating systems manager for CH2M HILL. “We can provide the same high level of consistency in our estimates for all of our clients, across all the industries and all of the countries we work in. Our clients have come to expect that from us, and we don’t disappoint. High quality estimates lead to successful projects.”

Standardize on a purpose-built tool

As the company expands organically and through acquisitions, new market sectors bring different approaches to estimating. “Of course there are always the spreadsheets,” notes Tipton. “I’ve seen great-looking estimates created using spreadsheets. The problem, though, is when the author of that spreadsheet leaves, no one knows how it works. Calculation errors sneak in without anyone knowing. Spreadsheets just aren’t practical or scalable for a company of our size.”

Challenge

As CH2M HILL expanded its footprint across the country and around the globe, the need for an enterprisewide estimating solution became clear. The company sought to standardize on a single toolset, ensuring the quality and consistency of its project estimates.

Solution

A robust suite of applications, including Sage Estimating, Explorer, and integrated add-on products, provide a comprehensive estimating solution for CH2M HILL.

Results

A single toolset that ensures quality and consistency across the hundreds of estimates produced each year. The ability to perform on-screen takeoffs shaves significant time from estimate creation. Leveraging historical data helps hone new project estimates.

Customer

CH2M HILL

Industry

Construction

Headquarters

Englewood, Colorado

Locations

Worldwide

System

Sage Estimating
On Center On-Screen Takeoff®
Explorer

“Sage Estimating has been tested and refined through thousands of estimates. It helps us bid, win, and deliver successful projects.”

Greg Tipton
Estimating Systems Manager, CH2M HILL

New employees are quickly trained on Sage Estimating, and the old spreadsheets are retired. “We all work with a common toolset,” says Tipton. “People clearly see its advantages in consistency and replicability over spreadsheets or other applications.”

Sage Estimating fosters a collaborative approach to estimating, with managers able to see which estimates are being actively worked on, and estimators able to share and exchange information as they work. This standardization also makes it easier for one estimator to pick up the work of another should the need arise.

Produce quality, consistent estimates every time

Using Sage Estimating, CH2M HILL can efficiently and consistently produce even the more complex quality estimates. “We enter project-specific data like the allowable markup and overhead percentages, and the software distributes those values throughout,” explains Tipton. “We know, and our clients know, that we’re handling the estimate according to our agreements.”

A single project may require as many as 15 or 20 estimates to cover the various disciplines such as electrical, plumbing, and indirect costs. Even though multiple estimators are involved in the production of these estimates, CH2M HILL is confident that they will all have a consistent look and follow the same rules. “Typically one estimator will set up a project template with the static data, and then the individual estimates are created from the template,” explains Tipton. “The nonvariable data propagates down through each estimate, ensuring we’ve got it right and saving a lot of time in the process.”

Many of CH2M HILL’s clients ask the company to utilize a specific Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) codes in their estimates. Estimators import these client-specific WBS listings into Sage Estimating, associating them with a client’s account. “We can assign multiple codes of account to each item, allowing us to reference both the clients’ codes and our own codes on estimates and reports,” explains Tipton. “That kind of flexibility is very important to us.”

Leverage historical data

The estimating team at CH2M HILL often refers to earlier estimates as they create new ones. “We look at similar estimates; projects of similar size and scope, or those in a specific city, for example,” says Tipton. “With more than 70,000 estimates on our server, finding representative samples could be difficult—that’s where Explorer comes in handy.”

Sage Estimating Explorer for Sage Estimating helps CH2M HILL manage and track its estimates. Using Explorer, estimators can search for an estimate file by a variety of attributes. “We can find just the ones we want in an instant,” says Tipton. “Explorer helps us mine our estimating database and the valuable data inside, so we can prepare new estimates faster and more consistently.”

Powerful reporting tools, including SAP® Crystal Reports, allow staff to further leverage the massive estimating database. “We create custom reports to meet the requests of our clients and the needs of our management team,” says Tipton. “All of the data is accessible and available for reporting and analysis.”

Streamline the takeoff process

To further speed and streamline its bidding process, CH2M HILL uses On-Screen Takeoff® from On Center Software in conjunction with Sage Estimating. Estimators perform the takeoffs electronically, dramatically cutting the time it would take to perform the takeoffs manually. “We get the counts and quantities directly from the electronic plans and they transfer right into Sage Estimating,” says Tipton.

Gain a competitive advantage

“We feel Sage Estimating gives us a competitive advantage,” concludes Tipton. “We have a cost estimating system and workflow that are nearly bulletproof. Sage Estimating has been tested and refined through thousands of estimates. It helps us bid, win, and deliver successful projects.”

About The Sage Group, plc

We provide small and medium-sized organizations with a range of easy-to-use, secure, and efficient business management software and services—from accounting and payroll to enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management, and payments. Our customers receive continuous advice and support through our global network of local experts to help them solve their business problems, giving them the confidence to achieve their business ambitions. Formed in 1981, Sage was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989 and entered the FTSE 100 in 1999. Sage has over 6 million customers and more than 12,700 employees in 24 countries covering the UK & Ireland, mainland Europe, North America, South Africa, Australia, Asia, and Brazil.

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