

i.Bizness

www.ibusinessmag.com

Apple Solutions for Business

Mike Gallagher
CEO of SpiderCloud Wireless, Inc.

SpiderCloud
Wireless

**SMALL COMPANY, BIG BUSINESS INSIDE
WITH SCALABLE SMALL CELL SYSTEM**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**TOP 25 BUSINESS APPLICATIONS FOR OSX & IOS
BEST OF CTIA 2014 SHOW
MAC OR IPAD - CHOOSING THE RIGHT DEVICE**

Consolidated Engineering Laboratories

Consolidated Engineering Laboratories uses custom FileMaker solutions for iOS running on the FileMaker Platform to automate workflows for materials testing vital for the construction industry

Materials testing company automates end-to-end business processes with suite of custom solutions for iOS Lab personnel, drivers and field inspectors equipped with iPads save time and reduce errors



As a provider of engineering and materials testing services to the construction industry on diverse, high-profile projects such as the Golden Gate Bridge and the Huntsman Cancer Institute in Utah, Consolidated Engineering Laboratories (CEL) helps ensure that construction projects are built on time and in line with quality standards. Considering its demanding projects, the company must keep a constantly connected, mobile workforce as productive as possible. To accomplish this goal, CEL relies on custom FileMaker solutions for iPad based on the FileMaker Platform.

“We needed a platform that was robust enough for us to develop sophisticated mobile solutions for iPad while still being able to communicate on the back end with our enterprise resource planning system and other core business applications,” explains Matthew Byrtus, CEL’s director of information technology. “FileMaker software is ideal for meeting that need.”

A pressing need to eliminate paper

Previously, CEL ran on mostly paper-based processes for testing and reporting. But these processes were costly, error-prone and slow, requiring approximately two weeks to cycle through from field input to an engineer-reviewed test report. “To achieve our goal of going paperless, we needed a solid, flexible platform designed for automation and mobility,” says Byrtus.

Streamlining business processes end-to-end

Looking for a solution optimized for iOS devices, CEL evaluated FileMaker Platform, which consists of FileMaker Pro, FileMaker Pro Advanced, FileMaker Server and the FileMaker Go app for iPad. “Between FileMaker Pro for the desktop and the FileMaker Go mobile app, we found everything we needed to go paperless,” notes Byrtus. “Even though we were totally new to FileMaker, it was easy to develop custom solutions. A key piece from Filemaker was the ability to program syncing when our field personnel do not have a connection.”

CEL started by building a FileMaker solution to track pickups of concrete and other sample construction materials for testing back at the company lab. Now, as calls come into CEL’s dispatch, drivers use their iPads to get real-time updates and can easily locate pickup sites to plan the most efficient routes. This has eliminated the errors and missed pickups that plagued CEL in the past.

A productivity boost through automation

Next, CEL developed an automated inventory system for checking its testing equipment in and out of the warehouse, as well as tracking equipment status and repair needs in the field using the FileMaker Go app for iPad. CEL also developed another FileMaker solution to manage its internal laboratory workflow.

“By automating our lab business processes with FileMaker, we’re now able to capture every opportunity for revenue generation, instead of missing

some as we did in the past,” reports Byrtus. “We can also provide test results in real-time to the field, and when an engineer approves a test, the report is automatically generated and pushed out to our web portal. It’s greatly improved productivity and efficiency.”

CEL is now taking on its most ambitious project to date: building the company’s core business workflow from field inspection and sample pick-ups to testing and reporting to clients using the FileMaker Platform. With this new solution, information will flow seamlessly from the dispatch office to nearly 200 field inspectors, providing them with all essential project details at their fingertips, including timesheets, reports, inspections and photos. Any updates made in the field are then automatically synced at the end of the day for internal processing. Eventually, CEL will use the FileMaker Go app to share data among 300 iPad users across the company.

“When it’s all said and done, we expect to reduce our original two-week turn-around time for reports to just 72 hours,” says Byrtus. “We’re already realizing significant ROI and expect that to grow as we continue to build new solutions and expand our use of FileMaker.”

“Even though we were totally new to FileMaker, it was easy to develop custom solutions. I can safely say that I can now run our entire organization from an iPad.”

—Matthew Byrtus, director of information technology, Consolidated Engineering Laboratories

Overview

Using a custom FileMaker solution for iOS that was built in-house, Consolidated Engineering Laboratories automates scheduling, inventory management and business workflows to streamline testing and reporting needed to keep construction projects on schedule and in compliance.

Industry

Construction engineering and materials testing

Solution

Custom FileMaker solution for iOS enables dispatchers, lab workers, drivers and field inspectors to track pickup and delivery of test samples, and automate reporting of test results using the FileMaker Go app for 300 iPad users.

Benefits

Automated dispatch, inventory management and business workflows; saved time; reduced errors; maximized revenue opportunities; ensured compliance; achieved rapid ROI.