Utility Line Services Digs for Deeper Profits With Sage MAS 200 and Job Cost

Utility Line Services (ULS) installs underground utilities for major water, telephone, gas, and electricity providers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. When the Phillies Stadium in Philadelphia needed new conduit and oil static lines, ULS completed the project quickly and without safety incidents. And when Exelon (PECO Energy) renovated its natural gas system beside a heavily traveled highway, they tapped ULS, who worked only at night to complete the job in record time.

ULS's jobs are big and complex, often lasting a year or more and involving diverse crews. The company outgrew Peachtree as its accounting package and searched for a system designed for mid-tier companies. "Although we checked out vertical products targeted specifically at the construction industry, we found Sage MAS 200 with Job Cost to be superior in both functionality and value," says Chuck Browning, ULS's controller. "We also selected Sage MAS 200 for its flexible structure, and the excellent support provided by our local reseller."

Sage MAS 200 has tied together all of ULS's operations into one seamless system, featuring automated general ledger, payables, receivables, sales orders, and bank reconciliation. Conversion of data from Peachtree to Sage MAS 200, a major concern, proved to be a non-issue, with even job component details and union records transferring smoothly. The most significant improvements of the upgrade have come from integrated job costing and payroll functions.

Job Cost Juggles Expenses

"We use Job Cost heavily on every project," explains Browning. "Our supervisors enter labor and material costs on handheld computers. We import this information into Sage MAS 200 through Visual Integrator and then compare field data with actual costs when invoices come in. Supervisors may not know about extra time or special requests for materials and tools that must be allocated to the job. With the new system, we're therefore doing a much better job of recouping total costs."

Many larger clients have their own job numbers they want ULS to use. No problem. Job Cost makes it possible to assign both internal and external identification numbers. "Job Cost saves a lot of time for everyone concerned," Browning says. "Whether we're a prime or subcontractor, we have the numbers we need at a moment's notice, and can be proactive in our relationships with customers and vendors alike."

Customer:

Utility Line Services, Inc.

Industry:

Utility contractor

Location

Conshohocken, Pennsylvania

Number of Locations: Three

Number of Employees: 400

System:

Sage MAS 200

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Bank Reconciliation
- General Ledger
- Job Cost
- Payroll
- Sales Order
- Sales Order Extended Solution
- Visual Integrator

Other Modules

- Kissinger Payroll Union Automation

CHALLENGE

Overloaded legacy software could not store or process massive amounts of job-specific construction and employee data.

SOLUTION

Sage MAS 200 with full complement of modules, including Job Cost and Visual Integrator to import payroll data.

RESULTS

Accurate allocation of job data so that all costs are recouped appropriately. Payroll can be prepared in-house and information is keyed only once, saving about four man-days every month.

Savings with In-House Payroll

Payroll used to be a major headache, since crews frequently work on different jobs every day. ULS had a payroll clerk to key in employee hours, account for taxes and union benefits, set up spreadsheets, modem data to an outside payroll agency, and then re-key data from the agency's report. Sage MAS 200 now automates all these functions.

"The Job Cost module is saving four solid days a month in data entry and manipulation for payroll," Browning comments. "The system generates all of our tax and union reports, and we don't need an agency any more. I can also extract data from Job Cost into Crystal Reports® to do financial statements, custom reports and detailed analysis, a convenience I appreciate."

Sage MAS 200's Magnetic Media module lets ULS file W2 data electronically, saving time over traditional form preparation. They use paper only for local taxes. Browning also plans to use the Direct Deposit Extended Solution for delivering weekly paychecks to its out-of-state employees, eliminating FedEx costs.

"I've been a CPA for 10 years and have worked with a lot of software packages," Browning says. "Sage MAS 200 is the most user-friendly system I've ever seen, and has optimized efficiencies throughout ULS. I'm so pleased with it, in fact, that we're converting a construction-based software application at a sister company we recently acquired to Sage MAS 200 and Job Cost."

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