



WTS

Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction sharpens business focus and technology resources by outsourcing specialized enterprise applications

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

The Challenge: To outsource or not to outsource?

This is the question faced by many companies undergoing a merger or acquisition while upgrading enterprise systems. More than ever, this is a time when balancing expanding enterprise needs and controlling IT resources is critical. When Hathaway Dinwiddie needed to implement a job cost and accounting system during a recent merger, reliability, flexibility and low capital expenditure were all part of the equation for choosing software as well as the mode of managing the system.

“We had been using PeopleSoft software for several years, and were pleased with its capabilities and performance—so, selecting a proven software provider was a no-brainer,” says Mark Liew, senior vice president and CIO for Hathaway Dinwiddie. “With the volume of work we carry, we can’t afford not to have a full-featured product that gives us the room we need to grow.”

Deciding whether to use an outsourcing partner to implement and maintain the system wasn’t as easy. “Outsourcing is an emotional decision because you’re giving up some control to a third party,” explains Vice President and CFO Dave Miller. “You have to be confident in the product you’re going to use, and equally certain that the service provider has the ability to tend to your needs in a responsive manner.”

Industry

Construction

Company Profile

Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction, a \$600 million company based in San Francisco, has a long history of shaping California skylines. The founding companies erected landmarks such as the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco and the Getty Center in Los Angeles. Today, the firm specializes in building micro-electronic and semiconductor manufacturing and other special-purpose facilities, as well as office buildings.

Situation

When the construction firm was sold by its parent company in 1997, managing its own job cost and accounting system became a top priority. Although the company was sold on PeopleSoft software, the question of whether to outsource or implement the system in-house underwent considerable debate. The fact that the company was going through a merger at the same time it was converting to a new system further complicated matters.

Solution

WTS, the first ASP focusing solely on PeopleSoft solutions, was chosen because it lived up to the standards of reliability and confidence inspired by the software it supports. In 1998 when Dinwiddie Construction merged with Hathaway Construction, WTS integrated the combined system in record time—under three months—for considerably less cost than the process would have taken in-house.

WTS SOLUTION: OUTSOURCE SPECIALIZED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY NEEDS WITH EXPERTS TO EASE INTERNAL LOAD



Ultimately, Hathaway Dinwiddie struck a balance between outsourcing and internal management of its IT systems. The company decided that WTS would be the most qualified to host the highly specialized job cost and accounting IT system. Meanwhile, the internal IT group would focus its expertise on supporting the company's local networks and other strategic initiatives.

"Outsourcing turned out to be a good decision for us; there was no sizable capital investment in computers or the additional staff we would have needed to manage the system in-house," says Liew. "I think we've achieved a good balance by identifying areas of our IT infrastructure that are conducive to outsourcing. The response time and support we get from WTS is better than we could provide in-house, so that saves everyone time and makes my job a lot easier."

Reliability was a key factor that sold Hathaway Dinwiddie on outsourcing with WTS. "Every business in this day and age relies heavily on its IT infrastructure to perform mission-critical daily business operations—any interruption of service can be devastating," explains Senior Vice President

and COO Dave Lee. "WTS has lived up to its reputation of being an extremely reliable service provider. We've been a customer for years, and I can't remember a time when there's been any significant downtime that's adversely impacted our business."

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits of partnering with WTS has been an increased ability for Hathaway Dinwiddie to focus on the company's core business. "We're in the construction business, not the IT business," says Lee. "While we need to be current in our information technology, we don't need to commit a significant portion of our capital to IT infrastructure. That's one reason WTS was so attractive."

WHY WTS?

WTS partners with its customers to ensure that the transition of enterprise systems and migration of data runs as smoothly and quickly as possible. "Any conversion is going to present some challenges to your ongoing operations, but WTS worked with our internal IT group to make sure there were few disruptions to our business operations," says Lee. "WTS also provided solid support in terms of training and guidance; they were highly responsive to all of our needs in learning to effectively utilize their services."

WTS's personalized approach was a real plus for Hathaway Dinwiddie. "Unlike some ASPs, WTS doesn't use a one-size-fits-all approach, but worked with us to make sure the system met our individual needs," says Lee. "We were really impressed with the unique features WTS had programmed into the PeopleSoft application specifically for the construction industry." The company has been so pleased with the relationship they extended their original three-year contract with WTS for an additional six years.



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