



Ahern Painting Company Inc.



Timberline Office[®]



Corporate Profile

Headquarters:

Melrose, MA

Type of Business:

Painting Contractor

Website:

www.ahernpainting.com

Timberline Office Modules:

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Address Book
- Billing
- Cash Management
- Financial Statement Designer
- General Ledger
- Information Assistant
- Inquiry Designer
- Job Cost
- Payroll
- Project Management
- Report Designer
- ODBC
- Create-A-Check Software

Ahern Painting Using New Software to Put Sheen on Bottom Line

Chris Lundgren knows that a little short-term pain can produce real long-term gain.

As vice president and head of finance and systems for Ahern Painting in Melrose, Mass., Lundgren has followed that philosophy to reap big rewards with a new software module. He and his team are using that module – Timberline’s Crystal Reports – to grasp the hidden drivers of profitability and generate a more robust bottom line.

The largest merit-shop painting contractor in New England, Ahern pays its sales professionals a commission based on the profitability of each job. The firm had been using Timberline’s Report Designer module to calculate each commission, but that module was not flexible enough to track how the ebb and flow of each job impacted profitability. Now, with Crystal Reports, the firm can pull together from different modules all the various transactions that impact a job and see them together in one report.

“Crystal Reports allows us to see everything we need to know to understand what drives the profitability of each job,” Lundgren says. “Over time, this will show us how we can best manage each facet of our work.”

Ahern is also using Crystal Reports to ease the posting of accrued overhead costs to jobs

for non-payroll based costs. The firm had used Microsoft Access to pull data from Timberline and calculate transactions to import back into Timberline, but this was a time-consuming, multi-step process that Lundgren had to undertake himself. Now, with Crystal Reports, this process has been streamlined into one simple step that Lundgren can delegate to any member of his three-person finance team.

In another bold stroke, Ahern is using Crystal Reports to produce task-based documents such as invoices and change requests in full-color, easy-to-read formats. In the past, documents generated by a Timberline task were produced in a bland, generic format. Now, a company that is paid to create a vibrant appearance for its clients is producing documents that stand out for their content and visual appeal, and reinforce the Ahern brand.

Under Lundgren’s lead, Ahern’s use of Crystal Reports is just one example of the firm’s innovative approach to managing its work. In fact, Lundgren is widely recognized within the industry for his ability to wring the most value from his operating software.

“I would say that curiosity has been important in moving us forward,” Lundgren says. “I’m not content accepting a result when I don’t know how that

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"I have referred several people to Timberline and United Solutions. It has been a winning combination for our business."

**– Chris Lundgren,
Vice President,
Ahern Painting**

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Cambridge, MA

result was obtained. We study the software, we read the help files, we call Support, and we try things out on practice data. Once we have that knowledge, we can apply the software in different ways. If we can devote four hours to figuring out how to reduce a repetitive one-hour task to five or ten minutes, we will always commit that four hours."

What is more, Ahern has used the Crystal Reports design for the Timberline Desktop used by its project managers, helping managers simplify routine tasks. With a single click from a job page on the Desktop report, project managers can generate an aged receivables listing that includes notations from all prior follow-up with the client, or an up-to-the-minute statement of account. Any time a fax number or email address appears, a single click on that text opens an email form already populated with the address, a context-sensitive subject line, boilerplate text, and a blind carbon copy to a public folder on the network. When the project manager clicks 'send,' the form either goes out via email or through the company's network fax gateway.

Although the company has been using Timberline software for ten years now, the software was

new to its project managers with the recent implementation of the Project Management module.

"We realized early on that Timberline's overwhelming choice of reports and inquiries could seem intimidating to a new user and hinder acceptance of the software," Lundgren says. "So we concentrated development for the project managers around the Timberline Desktop and making things as simple as possible for them. Using Crystal Reports as the reporting platform for the Desktop allowed us to bring together in one screen all the information the project managers need to see."

Reflecting on his team's new capabilities, Lundgren stresses the value of superior software -- and a strong support team.

"Greg Kirshe and United Solutions have been great to work with," Lundgren says. "I have referred several people to Timberline and United Solutions. It has been a winning combination for our business."

CHALLENGE

Install new software so this leading painting contractor could better grasp the hidden drivers of profitability and generate a more robust bottom line.

SOLUTION

Timberline's Crystal Reports module has helped Ahern pull from other Timberline modules all the various transactions that impact a job and see them together in one report.

RESULTS

Ahern can now understand what drives the profitability of each job. Over time, they will use the system to understand how they can best manage each facet of their work.



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