

Online Construction Management Software Automates the Contract Administration Process

Construction Communicator Targeted at Small to Mid-sized Building Projects

Construction Communicator™ (www.constructioncommunicator.com) enables architects, engineers, contractors and construction managers to track the up-to-date information (e.g., RFIs) they need to move a project forward quickly. This Web-based construction-management software, which was introduced today by Richard Sampson Associates, automates the established AIA contract-administration process.

The easy-to-use, online application enables team members to post and view questions, answers and other information about time-critical issues; and enables the construction manager (CM) to view, coordinate and help resolve outstanding issues. Construction Communicator is targeted at small to mid-sized building projects, including design build projects. This subscription service differs from most of the competition in its focus on time-critical information, its ease of use and its adherence to the industry's confidentiality requirements.

“Construction Communicator has really helped us reduce our contract-administration time,” said Dan Garcia of CPM Services in San Francisco, who has been using the application since 1999. “We like the fact that the team members can directly input questions and answers themselves; the construction manager doesn't have to reinput them. The logs are updated automatically, so we don't waste time in meetings reconciling them. And as soon as the questions and answers are posted on the Web, everyone can see the same information.”

Time-Critical Information Flow

Construction Communicator automates the way building professionals have worked for years; it does not ask users to learn a new way to exchange information.

Using intuitive online forms, subcontractors can directly input Requests for Information (RFIs) that the general contractor either answers directly or submits to the architect, using Construction Communicator. Similarly, the architect either answers the questions directly or forwards them to the design consultants, using Construction Communicator. The architect posts the responses on the Web, where they are available for all team members to see.

Other types of information, such as Construction Change Directives (CCDs), are also posted on the Web. Throughout the process, the information is updated in real time and the logs are always up to date.

The CMLog™ shows a summary of the outstanding items between the general contractor and architect. Automatic counters track the elapsed response time, enabling the construction manager to identify delays and prioritize outstanding actions. By giving the CM an overall

view of the information flow, Construction Communicator identifies the bottlenecks that occur when individuals do not respond to email, faxes or voicemail.

Differentiators: Ease of Use, Focus on RFIs, Respect for Confidentiality

The service differs from its competition in its ease of use. The simple graphical interface enables team members to begin using the service within about 30 minutes, with minimal instruction or support.

Another major differentiator is Construction Communicator's focus on the time-critical information that team members access often, such as RFIs, CCDs, Architect's Supplemental Instructions (ASIs), Requests for Proposals (RFPs), Construction Change Orders and contractor submittal logs. This approach focuses on sharing information for the future. Some construction Web services focus on archiving drawings, budgets and schedules, which are less useful for day-to-day technical decisions.

Also, unlike some of its competition, this service maintains privacy when parties with a contractual arrangement (e.g., the contractor and a subcontractor) share information. By adhering to conventional industry formats and routing protocols, Construction Communicator also minimizes unauthorized approvals (e.g., from a design consultant to a subcontractor).

"The key to the success of any construction project is the timely response to thousands of detailed questions," said Richard Sampson, president of Richard Sampson Associates of Pleasanton, California, the developer of Construction Communicator. "This lean application is focused on getting those answers in a timely manner. We're striving to do a few things well to build user acceptance, rather than trying to do too many things and overwhelm people. By automating the routine elements of contract administration, Construction Communicator frees the project team to solve the important problems that really delay projects," he added.

Other Major Features

Accuracy – Questions, answers and comments are input directly by team members, eliminating the confusion that can be caused when others reword or reinterpret information.

"Toggle" Capability – Team members can quickly toggle between the summary CMLog information and individual screens to view detailed information.

Web Service – Web hosting provides 24/7 access to real-time information, regardless of location. Deployment is simplified and the need for technical support is minimal.

Web Links – Construction Communicator can be easily linked to other Web-based programs (such as Microsoft Project 2002 or Microsoft Office applications) to monitor schedules, budgets and cash-flow projections.

Security – Password protection allows the construction manager and other team members appropriate access within a secure extranet environment, while protecting confidentiality where necessary (e.g., between the general contractor and subcontractors).

Size of Project – Construction Communicator can handle communication for small to mid-sized construction projects (including design build projects) that have the conventional organizational structure (general contractor/subcontractors, architect/consultants and construction manager).

Availability & Corporate Information

Construction Communicator, which has been in development for four years, has been used successfully in two projects. A short demo of the service is available on the Web site (www.constructioncommunicator.com). A more comprehensive demo and an evaluation version are available upon request. Customization services are available, and reseller and OEM inquiries are welcome.

Richard Sampson Associates, Inc., the developer of Construction Communicator, is a construction-management firm headquartered in Pleasanton, California. For more information about the company, visit www.rsai.com. For more information about Construction Communicator, visit www.constructioncommunicator.com; call 925-467-1196, ext. 11; or email info@constructioncommunicator.com.

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