Case Study

Information System
Planning Process

Client: General Contractor specializing in large commercial projects

Client Size

(Annual Revenue)

- ○ $10M to $50M
- ◉ $50M to $200M
- ○ $200M to $500M
- ○ $500M to $1B
- ○ Over $1B

Problem

This contractor had been successfully using an older version of the Concord software in a traditional, centralized environment on proprietary hardware. They had some custom programming work done but felt they had outgrown the software and were no longer getting the support they needed. Remote office personnel could dial in to use the accounting system, but the operations personnel were rarely using the system. Users complained that the system was cumbersome and slow.

Unique Challenges

While the information system software was a priority, several other issues and initiatives were being evaluated simultaneously. These included a wide-area network to connect all offices, an email server, project administration software, and estimating software. There was not a unified focus on the information systems. Personnel at each location were focusing only on the needs of their own office. There was little coordination of the various products and directions being pursued. Each office has some form of network, though not the same, and many individual software licenses. There was a degree of frustration as one system was not able to exchange information with another. With so many initiatives and software products to evaluate, purchase, and implement, the company's management wanted to be sure they knew where they were going with technology and how to best allocate their resources to get there.

Approach

Burger Consulting Group facilitated an information system planning process with a steering committee consisting of both operations and accounting personnel from each office. Using an initial workshop for the planning team, individual interviews at each location, and a second workshop, Burger Consulting Group helped the client develop a clear vision of where they stood and where they wanted to go. Burger Consulting Group then assisted with the selection of vendors and the implementation planning of each initiative.

Resolution

With Burger Consulting Group's help, the client developed a clear plan for their information systems and communicated it throughout the organization. They also selected their new information system software, project administration software, and network provider. They have implemented their WAN, a company wide email system, and a new accounting and management information system software. Once these two initiatives are completed, they will begin implementing their project administration software. Each of the components being implemented is designed to work together and will ultimately exchange data easily, making for a more efficient operation and broader access to information.

Lessons Learned:

- **Good planning means that a project can go forward in stages with a clear map to the future**
- **If all of the system issues seem overwhelming and complex, they probably are**