



## AT A GLANCE

### COMPANY:

The Aiken Group

### INDUSTRIES:

- Modular Buildings and Accommodations
- Maintenance and Outage
- Construction and Property Management Services

### HEADQUARTERS:

Aberdeen, Scotland

### WEBSITE:

[aikengroup.com](http://aikengroup.com)

### Results

- The initial test in HD came within sixteen dollars of the original estimate
- Users quickly adopted the new system with basic training, eliminating the need for spreadsheets
- Within six months more than 90% of Pullman projects were being estimated in HD

*Aiken Group Limited is a leading supplier of integrated, out-sourced, and solutions based engineering and specialist services—principally offshore accommodation upgrades and new builds, modular units and multi-discipline services.*

Established in 1987 and headquartered in Aberdeen, UK, the company occupies 930 square meters (10,000 square feet) of office space, 2,800 square meters (30,000 square feet) of warehouse and workshop space with an additional storage yard located at Marywell on the south side of Aberdeen.

## THE CHALLENGE

The Aiken Group had been spending significant capital developing internal project management methods that did not deliver a strategic functionality. The company needed to efficiently increase the quality of estimation, project tracking, and customer reporting.

Because the company was split over different engineering sectors, it was difficult to define a clear and consistent bidding process, particularly with the use of Excel spreadsheets. Each project had multiple spreadsheets to cover the various disciplines. The piles of spreadsheets became more difficult to control and were prone to errors. Because many processes relied on Excel spreadsheets and project actuals were not being updated with real field data, the estimating teams did not have a centralized and updated historical database to reference. Estimators were often forced to work overtime just to keep up with the number of bids being submitted.

Project tracking and controls relied on cumbersome timesheet collection that required repetitive data entry into multiple spreadsheets and systems, which proved to be a very expensive process to scale. The lack of integrated systems slowed new project mobilization and ramp-up to execution.

Actual cost and productivity data was not being compared to the final customer estimate, nor was the data used to update a central historical NORMS database for use in future estimates.

# THE SOLUTION

To solve the problem, Aiken invested in HD Project Cost Management Software. As an enterprise network-based system, the software was easily implemented and Aiken engineers quickly learned the system. With HD advanced features for total Project Cost Management (PCM), Aiken has expanded its estimating capacity and progress measurement capabilities to yield an increase in revenues, productivity, and greater project gross margins.

The company has since been able to significantly reduce the time and labor needed to input timesheets and man-hour productivity information, driving real-time project visibility and advanced customer reporting.

After developing a historical NORMS database packed with hundreds of Excel spreadsheets, industry libraries, and ongoing actual product data, the Aiken team has tripled the amount of work they can bid. This effectively increased bidding accuracy and improved per project gross margins.

HD solutions have since become a vital part of Aiken's standard business practices and are used across multiple departments. "This solution gave us the ability to replace hundreds of spreadsheets, while streamlining our collection and capture of historical data," Gareth James, Aiken Group IT Manager, said.

Aiken engineers can easily produce budgets and proposals for all projects, and the HD software has virtually eliminated the errors previously made with spreadsheets.

"Our bids using spreadsheets were 10%-20% less accurate than those done in HD,"

James stated. "It has gives us a chance to marry the plan, cost and schedule--the solution is much more accurate than spreadsheets."

James explained that data entry has significantly been improved with HD's Timesheet Collector. Before implementing the solution, one administrator would spend a whole day inputting 30 timesheets, proving to be a time-consuming task. Today, one administrator can input 200 timesheets in just a few hours, providing a drastic change in administration productivity and reducing overhead expenses.

Not only has the Aiken Group been able to significantly increase total productivity on day-to-day tasks, but James took full advantage of HD collaborative features to eliminate redundant data entry and simplify business processes. Utilizing HD's flexible API, James incorporated Microsoft SharePoint to build a powerful workflow and data integration platform that allowed seamless flow between the AutoCad design, ERP accounting systems, and analytical reporting.

While developing this in-house system, James began to revolutionize Aiken's business processes as he enabled easy access to useful information. Everything from job materials to purchase orders is now fully integrated under the HD solution. James has also built dynamic collaboration between AutoCad and HD cost models to create standardized templates and drawings used by a variety of departments.

Finally, using the HD platform, SQL Server, and SharePoint, James fully integrated the ERP, estimating, project controls and

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- Gareth James,  
Group IT Manager

timekeeping into the payroll system of Microsoft Access, creating a single entry IT ecosystem that delivers advanced analytics and reporting. This has steadily improved the workflow because most changes in SharePoint are done in real-time. Every aspect of the project is combined, centralizing all project events within HD and a web-based reporting portal.

Aiken also created a standardized way of reporting across multiple departments, projects, and geographies. With the convenience of collaboration, team members can perform their individual job functions and control separate project tasks at the same time—developing a more productive project management process.

Customers and executive management have fingertip access to real-time data. As a result, overall customer satisfaction, reporting accuracy, and timeliness have dramatically improved.

Aiken has seen more than a 300% increase in their total project productivity and a 40% increase in revenues.

James explained the end result, "HD is absolutely amazing! I don't know of any other product in the UK that can even compare with this solution."

