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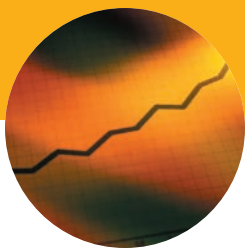


Off to the Races

Inside:

Restoring the
Kentucky Derby Museum

Air Washing
in Remediation



By Les Cunningham

Industry-based "HUB" Software can work for you!

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if you only had one software program to deal with in your business?

Have you wondered what it would be like to be able to use your computer on the job site or in your vehicle? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to know where everyone in your company was at a particular point in time?

Have you ever wished you could have everything you needed regarding your company software on your cell phone?

Is there one industry specific software available today that would allow you to efficiently and effectively run your business? In a word, no, but there are some very attractive options currently available.

Here are some suggestions and background information to help you understand where we've come from and make the best choice for your company. There are seven areas that need to be addressed:

- 1) CRM software that will keep track of requests via phone, in-person, e-mail, voice mail, snail mail and fax.

The industry started addressing this issue in the '80s with the use of software

called ACT. This and similar programs allowed users to enter names, phone numbers, addresses, notes and gave them the ability to set reminders for future activities. The first industry software developed was a software called SWATware. It was industry specific and was well received in the industry, however, the company that invented, owned and managed the software was better at being an insurance repair contractor than software developers. Since then programs such as JPP, Restoration Manager, ClientRunner and DASH have come into the marketplace.

- 2) GPS software that will track vehicles, equipment and people.

Global positioning software has been around for many years, but has just recently begun to gain in popularity within the general business community. It allows business owners to know

where their vehicles, equipment and people are at any time.

- 3) Estimating software that will communicate to all parties involved in a loss what the repair is going to cost, who will do the work and what work will be done.

Again in the '80s there were only a few options available for estimating,

most of them using spreadsheets maintained by the user, not the software developer.

In 1986, software named



Xactimate entered the industry. It was written by restoration contractors for both the restoration contractor and the insurance industry. Today, Xactimate has an 80 percent market penetration and continues to grow. Xactimate has pioneered and continues to develop a "HUB" philosophy that allows other software programs to connect with it. The "HUB" philosophy allows users to move between different programs and better control the desired chain of custody of the loss.

- 4) Contents management software that will allow companies to maintain a chain of custody, attach pictures, and price all content items removed and stored from the loss. It also should allow one to know where items are located and their quick retrieval when needed.

This software has been difficult to develop for several reasons. The first was that it needed to have a real-time pricing ability. The second reason was that it needed to allow for the use of mobile technology by both the contractors and the insurance

Use the software that best fits your system and then adapt your company to fit the remainder of what needs to be done.

companies. The first industry software to address the need was POI (Pack Out Inventory by Assured Software). The newest software in this category is SC.Net by NBD International. In addition to all of the standard features, it works on handhelds, is voice activated and converts the data from one language into another either verbally or with handwritten input. AMRestore software currently in the process of being beta tested will be able to use touch screen technology to further assist users.

- 5) Visual scheduling software to show all involved with the loss what needs to be done, when and by whom.

Microsoft has developed MS Project, which is universal software for all types of companies, especially construction. MS Project works in conjunction with their Windows Platform and the software is used by all types of companies to schedule desired outcomes within their companies. Other programs like JPP & Xactimate, have developed scheduling that can be used within their software for much smaller jobs.

- 6) Accounting software to keep track of all income, expenses and profit.

Most insurance repair contractors start out using QuickBooks to keep track of their income, expenses and profit. As they begin to grow above \$1,000,000, they begin to look at switching into an industry specific, double entry accounting software that better meets their needs.

- 7) All of these features must be both server and Internet based so that anyone in the company connected with the loss can use web-enabled cell phones to access the entire software system.

Steps 1-7 need to be entered, viewed and responded to by all of the members involved with the loss. You also need to be able to address and direct the actions inside the software as things happen.

Information on some of the software programs mentioned above can be found on their websites (in alphabetical order):

- 1) www.a-systems.net
- 2) www.amrestore.com
- 3) www.assuredsoftwarelimited.com
- 4) www.ClientRunner.com
- 5) www.d-a-s-h.net
- 6) www.msproject.com
- 7) www.nbdinc.com
- 8) www.provensolutions.ca
- 9) www.restorationmanager.net
- 10) www.Xactware.com

At the beginning of this column, I raised several questions regarding what software might be used by a company and staff. Currently, there is not a single software that can be used for all of the functions discussed here. What has been developing over the last few years is the concept of using "HUB" software, where program developers use their software to interact with other programs.

Companies should select software that connects with others to make life easier. Use the software that best fits your system and then adapt your company to fit the remainder of what needs to be done. Contact the software companies listed above and ask what they do and how they connect with other programs. Then you will be able to decide what would be the best mix of software for you and your company. ■

Les Cunningham is an industry consultant and an expert on running profitable businesses. He can be contacted at Les@BusinessNetworks.com.