

TKDA

High-profile A/E and Planning firm improves project management, resource planning with Deltek Vision®

OVERVIEW

With more than 200 employees and \$28 million in annual sales, TKDA, an engineering, architecture and planning firm, is a thriving, employee-owned company that has been in existence nearly 100 years. The St. Paul-based company serves a diverse client base in both public and private sectors including airports, highways and bridges, railroads, municipal services, and facilities engineering and architecture.

“Our clients’ operations and asset management needs are very sophisticated in today’s competitive environment,” noted Dick Sobiech, president/CEO. “In order to improve TKDA’s performance as a progressive design and business resource on our clients’ teams, our project managers needed access to real-time scheduling and cost information for maximum project delivery. The decision to invest in an integrated system offered a two-fold return — for our clients and TKDA.”

THE NEED

TKDA needed an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution with the flexibility to manage the depth and span of its client relationship management (CRM), financial accounting and project planning. For almost 15 years, TKDA had been using a separate financial product to manage its financial and project accounting. The company had also purchased Deltek CRM & Proposals in the late 1990s to meet a growing customer relationship management need that its accounting software was not equipped to address.

It soon became clear that maintaining the most accurate, up-to-date contact, project and employee information using CRM was not an option, but rather a necessity. The firm also realized that seeking a stronger project management and resource planning solution would positively benefit its bottom line through the ability to forecast project profitability and improve resource utilization.

To meet all these needs in the most seamless and efficient way possible, TKDA began searching for one integrated ERP system in which financial accounting, project management, resource planning and client relationships could all be handled in a single database. TKDA vice president Bill Deitner provided senior management oversight while project manager Jeff Eckerle managed the project on a day-to-day

“What used to be a month-long process to create invoices, now takes just days.”

Jeff Eckerle, Project Manager with TKDA.

Stats at a glance

Company Name

TKDA

Headquarters

St. Paul, MN

Employees

200

Primary Business

TKDA is a 200-person engineering, architecture, and planning firm headquartered in Saint Paul, Minn., with branch offices in Chicago, Ill., and Grand Rapids, Minn. Ranked among ENR's Top 500 Design Firms, TKDA provides multi-discipline planning and design services to aviation, rail, surface transportation, municipal and facilities market sectors.

URL

www.tkda.com

basis through the phases of software assessment, data migration, business process evaluation and staff training over an 18-month time frame.

Several software products were evaluated including Microsoft Business Solutions, JD Edwards and Deltek Vision, a fully automated, Web-based ERP system designed specifically for professional services firms. According to Eckerle, the choice was clear.

"Deltek's focus on the engineering and architecture industry was the deciding factor," Eckerle explained. "The other solutions did not demonstrate enough focus in our industry of project-based business models."

TKDA purchased Deltek Vision in fall 2003 and conducted a detailed, intensive training regimen for its employees who would be using the integrated financial accounting, project planning, marketing and HR system.

"Once we determined how to integrate our own business processes into Vision, we created a training manual that documented process for project management and business development tracking," Eckerle said. "The manual actually got a lot of positive attention from other firms who had also purchased Deltek Vision."

To ensure its employees would be fully comfortable with Vision, each project manager participated in at least 12 hours of training over three different sessions, covering key issues such as timekeeping, lookups and dashboard; authorizing projects; and plan/project management within Vision. Accounting and marketing staff were also trained in client and project entry and reporting functions. After the bulk of training was complete, TKDA went live with Vision in July 2004.

THE RESULTS

Utilizing Vision as the core of TKDA's financial and project accounting, Eckerle points out the efficiency improvements to the company's accounting processes.

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"What used to be a month-long process to create invoices, now takes just days," Eckerle said. "That equates to at least \$2 million per month positive impact on cash flow for the 300 to 500 invoices that we generate each month."

Eckerle believes that Deltek Vision has also reduced the amount of inefficiencies produced by the lack of integration of the systems that TKDA had been previously utilizing. Data management throughout the company has significantly improved.

"Even a small change such as an employee pay rate increase, or a change of department, was previously a hassle," he said. "A change would need to be updated in each system and on different lists. Vision has eliminated this inefficiency, reducing inaccurate data and confusion."

Eckerle also points to Vision's resource planning as another key benefit. "With Vision, managers can now view projected profitability and closely monitor projects that may be at risk to budget or scheduling issues, taking corrective action to avoid overruns before they happen," Eckerle said. "Vision will help us keep our client's projects on budget and reduce unprofitable projects."

In addition, TKDA is utilizing Vision's CRM functionality to better understand its marketing efforts, storing client, prospect and employee

THE CHALLENGE	THE SOLUTION	THE DELTEK ADVANTAGE
<p>Quality Research realized that under its existing systems, the company potentially faced problems such as cumbersome and unreliable payroll and billing processes; financial statements that were slow to deliver; and DCCA audits that were growing increasingly complex.</p>	<p>Quality Research chose Deltek's Enterprise solution to improve the accuracy and reliability of its data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to maintain a constant billing cycle and to post information on a weekly basis. • The company has not only become more efficient with their processes, but has also obtained more accurate and up-to-date information. • Project managers are now able to view the information in the system and correct errors before they can affect the overall status of a project.

information, as well as tracking activities, meetings and opportunities.

TKDA's marketing and business development director Christine Wiegert pointed out a marked improvement in both lead tracking and forecasting projected revenues. "With Deltek Vision, the accessibility and accuracy of prospective client and project information allows us to focus on utilizing the information to pursue our business development goals, versus engaging in an on-going labor-intensive search and compilation of data from multiple sources," she said. "Now there is a true sense of integration between our marketing efforts and the rest of the company."

The company is also planning to use Vision to better track return on investment for its marketing efforts. By coding promotional projects and linking them directly to target markets, Wiegert is confident that Vision will help maximize TKDA's marketing efforts.

Overall, TKDA has been able to restructure its business process model by integrating their marketing functions with Vision's project management and resource planning capabilities.

THE FUTURE

Dick Sobiech has high hopes for TKDA and its future growth using Deltek Vision. As he looks forward, he believes the company will receive their best return in the areas of project management and resource planning.

"Managing project profitability, utilization and marketing activities are the key factors that drive the success of our business," Sobiech said. "Vision has also created a cultural change. Performance management was somewhat subjective in the past, but Vision output is leading to more quantifiable metrics. Vision is a tool that will help us better manage these metrics in the future."

"Deltek Vision has filled the integration gaps that we were experiencing with the previous system," Eckerle added. "With the amount and stature of projects under TKDA's belt, we needed an ERP solution in which we could efficiently manage our project needs as well as our client relationships. Vision was our answer and is solid proof that Deltek knows our industry inside and out."

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Deltek is a global leader dedicated to delivering enterprise management software that meets the unique needs of project-focused organizations. With over two decades of experience, Deltek enables companies to maximize profitability and productivity, integrating all aspects of their businesses. More than 11,000 customers worldwide rely on Deltek to streamline operations, improve performance and win more business.

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