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Commercial Director  
Lancsville Construction

## Building on Information: Lancsville Construction

When it comes to juggling, circus clowns have nothing on the people that manage construction projects. Just ask Alan Moone, the commercial director at Lancsville Construction, a sizable building company based in London. Moone deals with the financial side of the many bids that Lancsville fields each year. Putting together bids involves an amazing amount of detail, as Moone needs to synthesize details from a myriad of sources, such as design specifications, drawings, subcontractors, and materials suppliers.

And that's just the beginning. Once Lancsville is awarded a bid, the real fun starts. Any construction project is a study in constant change, as work progresses amidst conditions that demand constant revision and adjustment. Architects send changes to the design, price fluctuations affect the cost of building materials and project timelines need to be met. And Lancsville doesn't deal in small projects. "At any one time, we have between 15 and 20 projects, ranging in cost from about \$1 million to \$11 million per project," says Moone.

Then add to the mix the fact that Lancsville does a lot of refurbishment work—the company is currently restoring the English National Opera, for example—which requires constant monitoring by historical societies, such as English Heritage, to make sure that the renovations are historically accurate.

What does this all add up to? "A huge amount of paperwork—contracts and inquiries, requests for bids, specifications, architectural drawings," says Moone. With all that paper, it's an enormous job to keep all the information accurate and up to date—and vital to do so. After all, if the contractors on a site use the wrong version of drawings to proceed on a building, Lancsville could spend a lot of time and money rectifying the error.

Onsite managers must check every new piece of information against the original bid, so that they may correctly calculate the fiscal or architectural repercussions, says Moone. "For example, say I put in a bid for a job in January, and we started the job in July, with construction information drawings issued by the architect. A lot of times there will be major changes in the specifications, such as a type of stress graded timber. All that information needs to be checked against the previous bid information."

Moone used to depend on faxes and courier services to ferry information to the construction sites scattered across the country, but he found it both expensive and somewhat risky. The problem lay in the fact that once the bid information was onsite, it was easy to lose and difficult to retain version control.

Moone turned to the Canon/eCopy solution to create a centralized repository of project information, scanning the original project bid—which can run to 500 or 600 pages of data—onto a central server. "Employees on remote sites can then use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to check out the information," he says. Moone says that eCopy has been vastly helpful in creating a workable organizational process for project details. "Now we can keep all the original tender information in the office, and people check the new live information against the server," he says. "The documents can't get removed and lost, as they would with a paper file, and having a PDF copy means that people can't alter the document."

Lancs ville organizes the scanned information by project-assigning each a job number--and Moone and colleagues can look in the pertinent folder for a clean history of the project. Moone says that site folks such as engineers, project managers, and quantity surveyors find the service invaluable, as they always know precisely where to find vital information.

"It makes sense organizationally to have it all in one spot," says Moone. "It's important for us to have as much documentation as possible." Although he can't quantify it, Moone says that he's sure it's helped Lancs ville avoid some costly errors. "It helps to make sure we keep our business in line. eCopy means that when any information comes into the office, people can access it and look at folders and see that the information they have here is as up to date as the information they have there. It really gives us a solid and reliable way to check."

In fact, Moone thinks the Canon/eCopy solution is so useful that they've installed a new 300 gigabyte server to hold the information. "Our old server has about 25 gigs," he says. "We're gearing ourselves for huge amounts of stored documents in the future."

## **A profile of Lancs ville Construction Limited**

Lancs ville Construction was founded by its current managing director in 1973, and has developed into a successful multi-disciplined construction company, operating primarily in London and the surrounding counties. Its operations include sub-contracting, trade contracting, and main contracting throughout all sectors of the market place, and provides deep expertise with new building projects, as well as renovations and interior work.

Drawing on the strength of its knowledgeable management team and strong organizational structure, Lancs ville provides design teams and construction management teams with a well-balanced and practical approach to the methodology and co-ordination of a project. By working in close liaison with clients, their representatives, and design teams to achieve project success, Lancs ville has developed many long-lasting relationships, which is reflected in the high proportion of repeat business enjoyed by the company.

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