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AKV Fabrications simplify and ramp up estimate production

Within a stone's throw of the hallowed turf of West Auckland AFC, mighty conquerors of Juventus in football's first World Cup of 1910, is one of the leading suppliers of bespoke cladding products.

Working extensively with clients, architects, designers, contractors and cladding specialists, AKV architectural Fabrications of Shildon can boast an impressive portfolio of projects ranging from the Newcastle United Stadium, to a host of high street names such as Comet and B&Q.

Since the early 90's AKV has built up a solid reputation for delivering an increasingly diverse and specialised portfolio of high quality, competitively priced products and services.

In the ultra competitive world of cladding, success comes down to three things...price... delivery... and... quality.

Matching client requirements with the ability to competitively deliver means that no two jobs are the same. And because no two jobs are ever the same, no two estimates are ever the same.

Increasingly frustrated by the amount of time and effort that was being spent generating estimates, using tools such as spreadsheets and accounts software, Beau Stevens the managing director, and Dave Knowles the production director, both agreed that simplifying this bottleneck would return handsome dividends for the company, its staff and customers.

The problem was...where would they find such a tool.

Unconvinced that a substantial and painful costly upgrade to their accounts software would eliminate the headache, Beau and Dave contacted Database Software Solutions, who had just completed an estimating project for a local cladding contractor.

Now bespoke cladding manufacturing and cladding contracting are two different fields, but at least it was heading in the right direction.

After a number of meetings outlining how AKV quoted for bespoke cladding work, and being impressed by how quickly Database Software Solutions grasped the massive amount of variations that go into generating an estimate, Beau and Dave reached the only logical decision they could.

If your business is bespoke, you need a bespoke estimating tool.

The feature rich tool that Beau, Dave and Database Software Solutions jointly built has dramatically simplified and streamlined a critical and fundamental process of how AKV do business.

The program's capability includes quoting for such product categories as:

- Flashings
- Waterproofed galvanised gutter
- Insulated galvanised gutter
- Aluminium rainwater pipe
- Insulated aluminium gutter
- Single skin aluminium gutter
- Single skin galvanised gutter
- Trim line gutter
- Trim line rainwater pipe
- Membrane gutter
- Corners
- Butt straps
- Straight bull nose
- Rainwater piping joints

Credit Control

Built in credit checking at the quotation stage has given the directors fingertip control on ensuring that outstanding monies are chased promptly and efficiently. Credit control is tracked and managed from the enquiry all the way through to delivery.

Deliveries

Charging for deliveries is a fickle business in the world of bespoke cladding manufacturing. Clients don't want to pay for it and industry wafer thin margins means manufacturers cannot give it away for free. With the system working on predetermined rules, the estimator is now given flexibility on how it is presented on the quote. Either way management are assured that in all instances it is charged for.

Management Reporting

For Beau and Dave, being able to see where they are winning and losing in the estimating department, is a solid yardstick of how their business is performing at any moment in time. The old way of measuring was to key information into a number of Excel spreadsheets. The only problem with this was that it usually took 3 days and, they will readily admit, it didn't happen religiously.

Now this 3 day chore is reduced to 1 hour... with guaranteed accuracy, and without gobbling up important valuable staff time.

Instant key reports include:

- Estimates to Follow up
- Estimates by Month
- Estimates by Customer
- Sales by Work Type Ratios

Marketing Capability

An important part of the business is ensuring that the people who can directly influence the use of AKV products and services are regularly updated. Seamless integration between the estimating database and Microsoft Word means that mail shots are childlike simplicity. Integration with email means it doesn't cost anything.

Overall Benefits

When asked to summarise the benefits the system has delivered to AKV, Dave's enthusiasm shines through when he talks about the three big ones:

- A 20% speed improvement in terms of estimate production. More time means more estimates get done, and with more estimates comes more orders. The big plus is that people get the time to do things right, because technology has taken the strain out of a large number of tasks that used to eat up time and resources.
- Consistency is a big plus, because every estimate generated is based on the same rules. Built in checks ensure that mistakes, omissions, or folly pricing, don't happen.
- Reduced errors, because nothing is forgotten about, which means no double checking. Select a category, and all the associated costs are built in. For example; powder coatings.

Continues Dave "in a nutshell, it has made the job of quoting for work easier. Because of this it has given both Beau and me far greater control in one of the most important areas of our business".

"However, we both agree that Stage 2, when we extend it to add in stock control, document management, purchase ordering, sales ordering, and deliveries, is where we will see even bigger returns".

"By having a company wide system where everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet, and where from one screen you can drill down and see the full picture of a customer order from the enquiry to invoice, is going to make us so much more efficient and productive."

If you would like to discover how Database Software Solutions can lighten the load for your estimating department and put you in total control please contact:

Alex Muir
Database Software Solutions Limited
Stocksfield NE43 7TW
T: 01661 844864
M: 07703 260568
E: alex@dbasesolution.co.uk
W: www.quotecladding.com

AKV can be contacted at:

AKV Architectural Fabrications Limited
Hackworth Industrial Park,
Byerley Road, Shildon,
County Durham,
DL4 1HF, United Kingdom
W: www.akvlimited.com
Tel: 01388 775489
Fax: 01388 776517
Contact: Dave Knowles - Production Director or Beau Stevens - Managing Director