

CASE STUDY

To Escape Paper, FHU Heads to the Cloud

CHALLENGE

Tom Nead, the Regional Manager for the Construction Management group of Felsburg Holt & Ullevig's (FHU) Mountain West region, had a mountain of his own to cross. Namely, the mountain of paperwork generated by an outdated paper-based process. Seeking to automate manual processes and cut down on wasted labor hours, Nead began vetting cloud-based construction administration and inspection solutions.

SOLUTION

Appia® – Infotech's leading solution for construction administration and inspection.

Real-time daily entries from the field and the ability to run comprehensive reports give Nead and his team an edge on projects small and large - like on an \$80 million road-widening project with 600+ pay items.

RESULTS

**Improved
Pay Item Management**

**Office & Field Staff
Time Savings**

**Greater
Stakeholder Visibility**

Working with Colorado DOT Sparks a Search

FHU is a construction and engineering consultant that provides owner's representation services to municipalities and state DOTs throughout the Midwest. As the Regional Manager for FHU's Mountain West region, Tom Nead primarily works with the Colorado DOT (CDOT) at the state level.

When working with CDOT, Nead and his team use AASHTOWare Project SiteManager™, the transportation department's preferred software platform for construction project management. When they weren't working with CDOT, everything from daily reporting to pay item tracking was managed in a complex network of forms, Word documents, and Excel spreadsheets. Unsurprisingly, CDOT jobs were heavily preferred. So Nead began hunting for a solution.

"I was looking for solutions for projects when I don't work for CDOT, when I work for a city, county, or toll authority and they don't have SiteManager. I really didn't want to go back to doing spreadsheets and documents ever again."

TOM NEAD
REGIONAL MANAGER, FHU



To Fix Problems on the Ground, Head to the Cloud

Nead had successfully worked with Infotech in the past and selected Appia for its cloud computing capabilities. The flexibility granted by the cloud immediately transformed daily-reporting and field operations for the company. Thanks to the ability to log data in the field and run reports back in the office, wasted labor on travel and manual processes were quickly eliminated.

"Inspectors with cellular coverage can be out in the field working in the app. Anyone else on the project team can see information more quickly in real-time, as opposed to that person in the field having to drive back to the office the next day, print it out, and put it in a book."

Those time savings benefit the client as well as the project team, not to mention enabling a level of multi-tasking that wasn't before possible.

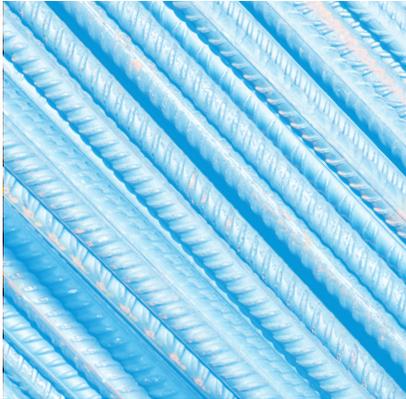
"Not having to drive to the project field office and manually flip through books is saving our clients having to make that trip. For our project engineers, it helps them manage multiple projects at once more easily, because they don't need to drive around to look at hard copy documentation."

Powering Through Large Project Pay Items

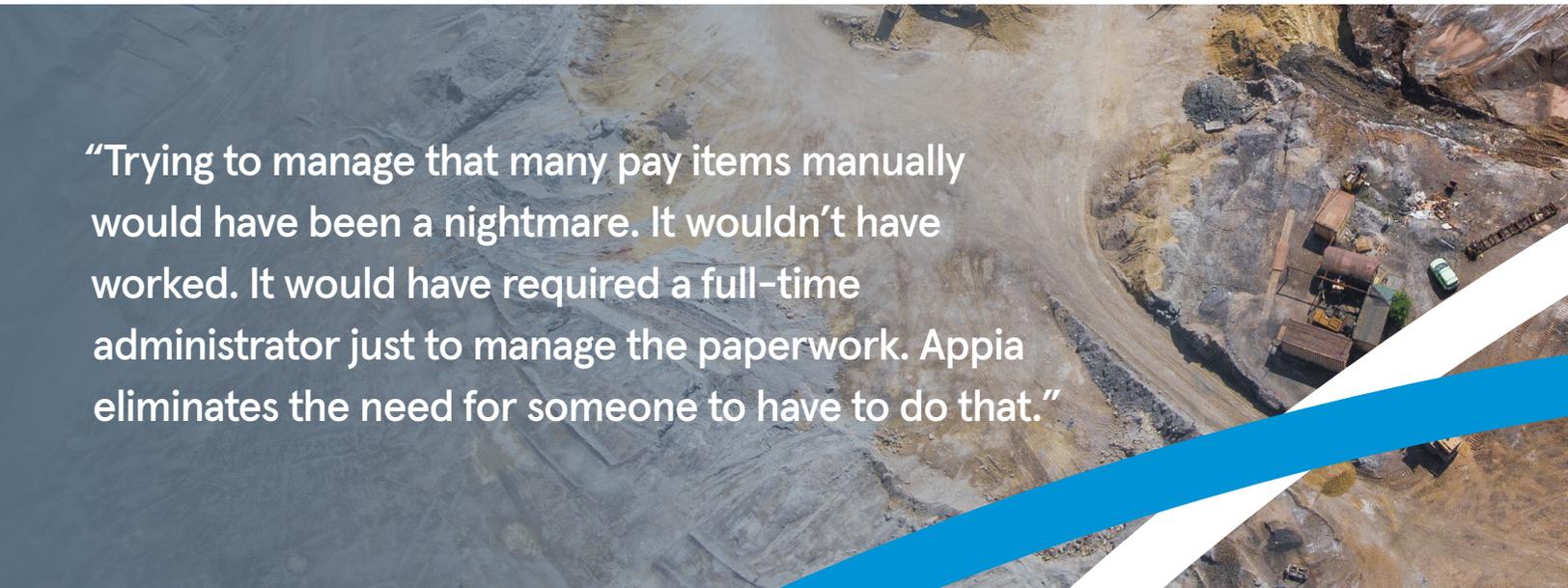
Nead has a simple philosophy regarding project size and complexity: as the number of pay items increases, so does the benefit of having Appia to manage them. That thought process was readily apparent on an \$80 million road-widening project with three funding packages that came in at three different times.

To manage these packages, and the 600-700 associated pay items that came with them, Nead and his team set up each package as an individual project to simplify pay item management. With this system, they were able to verify pay items and keep the project moving quickly.

Nead credits Appia with helping his team see the project through to completion without too many headaches or wasted manhours.



“We can run a report for a certain pay item number and compile all the payments that are posted in Appia in one place. If someone is saying that they’re paving a section of sidewalk, but you’re in a curb and gutter pay item, the mistake will stand out really quickly.”



“Trying to manage that many pay items manually would have been a nightmare. It wouldn’t have worked. It would have required a full-time administrator just to manage the paperwork. Appia eliminates the need for someone to have to do that.”

Expediting Payments through Accurate Reporting

Nead and his team at FHU use Appia in two different ways for pay estimates. Sometimes, they'll use Appia's pay estimate generation capabilities to create the estimate and have the contractor sign off on it. But often, when working with smaller towns, the contractor has to submit a pay application for review. And that's where discrepancies are most likely to arise.

Under the old system, resolving those discrepancies involved filling

out a form for every individual measurement, tabulating and summarizing those measurements at the end of the month, and comparing the results to the contractor's estimate. Within Appia's automated database, all the inspector has to do is enter the quantities into the system and compare them, removing the need for calculation and the risk of human error.

On the projects where the contractor submits a pay

application, it's common for requested quantities to differ on pay items for a variety of reasons. With Appia, disputes and overruns are avoided ahead of time.

"We're able to have reconciliation meetings where we sit down with the contractor and figure out our differences. We can easily find out if my inspectors forgot to enter a run of pipe that was installed, or if the contractors had a typo. Appia definitely helps with avoiding overruns."

Easy to Implement, Even Easier to Use

If you're looking to implement a cloud-based software solution like Appia but are worried about the transition process, rest assured that the learning curve for Appia is minimal. But don't just take our word for it.

"It's really simple, especially with the entry-level folks that pick up on computers fast. A better example is that the 65-year olds that start working with it like it and think it's easy - which is probably a bigger testament."

Streamline your processes with a web-based, mobile-accessible service built on intuitive use and flexibility.

- + Mobile Field Inspection
- + Comprehensive Daily Reporting Features
- + Automated Item & Material Tracking
- + Efficient Payment Management
- + Real-Time Project Access

Visit infotechinc.com/appia to learn more.