

# Technology is Making a Difference on Bid Day

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Ask any construction estimator and they will tell you that one of the most daunting challenges they face is overcoming the ever-shrinking margin for error on bid day. In today's ultra-competitive industry, finding one number makes the difference between success and failure on bid day ... and many construction professionals are turning to a technology platform to gain that extra edge throughout the pre-construction phase and right through bid day.

**T**he most comprehensive pre-construction/bid management technology available today is provided by Cincinnati-based construction technology firm iSqFt. Already a national partner of the Associated General Contractors of America, iSqFt features an online application that caters to both the general contracting and subcontractor/supplier communities.

General contractors make use of the company's Private Construction Office™ (PCO) to assist them throughout pre-construction and gain the advantage needed for success on bid day - all while attaining real hard-dollar cost savings.

The iSqFt Private Construction Office™ is a secure, online collaboration, invite-to-bid, plan distribution and pre-construction management service that is gaining wide acceptance by general contractors across the country. The crucial benefits general contractors who currently utilize the PCO have realized include:

- a significant reduction in paper costs due to internet distribution and online viewing of plans, specs, and addenda – including an easy method for printing and downloading locally
- access to a greater number of subcontractors and suppliers, in multiple markets, leading to an increased number of qualified bidders on bid day
- on-line collaboration throughout the pre-construction phase through a live webconferencing feature that is part of the PCO package

- consistency in file formats ensuring that documents and plans reproduce exactly the same from project to project, no matter the method of reproduction
- the project data for the Private Construction Office is maintained and hosted on iSqFt's servers allowing for secure 24/7 access to all participants while removing IT requirements from the contractor and eliminating costs for maintenance and upgrades

One of the primary concerns that general contractors have expressed in regard to the PCO is the willingness for subcontractors and suppliers to adopt and utilize an online bidding system. Contrary to these commonly held assumptions, practical results have demonstrated a completely opposite picture. In 2004 alone, the equivalent of 52 million blueprint pages were viewed, downloaded, or printed by subcontractors through iSqFt. This is tangible proof that not only are subcontractors willing to utilize an online solution, but many invite the opportunity as they see it as a crucial way to aid their growth.

Another benefit to subcontractors and suppliers, and the second portion of the iSqFt online portal, is the Internet Plan Room™ (IPR). Through partnerships with organizations such as the AGC, iSqFt operates internet plan rooms throughout the country, including statewide coverage in Indiana through three separate IPR's - Indianapolis, Evansville, and Merrillville. These IPR's give subcontractors additional reach to find new projects and general contractors



to provide with bids – creating a nearly endless supply of opportunities for growth on a local, regional, or even national level.

Through the Internet Plan Room™, subcontractors gain additional benefits that make them both more efficient and better able to provide general contractors with more competitive bids. Some of the notable features of the IPR include:

- online plans and specs for all projects that exist in the IPR

- a highly compressed file format that makes the plans and specs consistent and easy to use, and also provides the ability to view, download, and print the drawings locally, or through an easy-to-use paper ordering system

- ability to view the information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from the office, home, or anywhere internet access is available

- the iSqFt Toolbox is free to all service subscribers, which provides the ability to perform on-screen take-offs

The construction business is evolving more rapidly today than ever before, and technology solutions, such as those provided by iSqFt, are quickly becoming one of the primary ways contractors are finding the one number that means success on bid day. Even without taking into account the mounting evidence that the service pays for itself, and then some, in real hard-dollar cost savings – each day more and more construction industry professionals are learning that they can't afford not to investigate what online technology could do for them.

Technology is the future of construction ... and the future is now. Investigate what iSqFt can do for you.

## ABOUT iSqFt

Founded in 1993 as Construction Software Technologies, Inc., Cincinnati based iSqFt is the construction industry's leading provider of online bid solicitation and management services. Currently, the company ranks 1st in the construction industry category and 50th overall in Inc. magazine's "Inc. 500" listing of the fastest growing privately held companies in the United States. In 2004 the company acquired pre-construction and bid solicitation software providers BidFax and Buildpoint – incorporating the best features of these packages into the iSqFt application.

For more information about iSqFt, the Private Construction Office™, or the Internet Plan Room™, visit [www.isqft.com](http://www.isqft.com) or call 1.800.364.2059.

## General Contractor Successes of Utilizing the iSqFt Network

A \$300 million design-build contractor in Texas recently bid a large medical center project across the country from their local market. Based upon their previous success using the PCO, plans were not printed and distributed to subs for the project. Based upon the size and scope of the project, the company expected to receive 120 to 130 subcontractor bids. "We were pleasantly surprised to receive over 200 qualified bids for this project on bid day without distributing paper drawings!" The company's actual total of 209 bids received was a company record – and it now mandates use of the PCO for all of the projects it bids.

The PCO has demonstrated that significant cost savings can be achieved. One large national contractor was pleased to learn that "on the very first project using the PCO we are on track to save at least \$200,000 from the dramatic reduction in printing and distribution costs" associated with providing plans and specs to its subcontractors.

### Subcontractor/Supplier Successes of Utilizing the iSqFt Network

One subcontractor refers to iSqFt as the best thing to ever happen to their bidding process. They state that "we never have to leave the office to get plans for jobs and the iSqFt toolbox has cut our take-off time in half – leading to a higher production rate for our estimators".

Another subcontractor related that after using their previous estimating system for more than a decade, they recently switched to the iSqFt network – and the difference in production and cost has been dramatic. "The total cost is less than half our previous system, and our production has increased more than 35%."