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Wantman Group, Inc.

Case Study

Engineers Improve Planning Using Planifi's Project Analyzer



Wantman Group forecasts revenues, expenses and personnel needs more accurately, further into the future

In the spring of 2012, Wantman Group had a good problem: Several big survey contracts each promised fees approaching \$800,000, but as many as 400 field days of work all seemed to land in July!

Fortunately, the multidisciplinary engineering firm's project managers and executives gained a clear view of the schedule and its staffing needs. Planifi Project Analyzer software made it easy.

"Planifi Project Analyzer showed we would need to double our eight survey crews, to 16," said Chief Financial Officer Tim Nicoulin. "It gave us 12 weeks to get trucks and prepare crews instead of leasing equipment and subcontracting the work, as we would have done in the past."

Reliable data gave executives the confidence and lead time to make a significant investment in staff and capital equipment. "Opinions confuse, but facts convince," Nicoulin said. "Now we have facts, not only in survey but in our engineering divisions."

President David Wantman had used other financial and resource planning programs that had failed to deliver. "Planifi Project Analyzer is different," Wantman said. "We finally found a program that actually does what it says it will do!"

Wantman Group, Inc., is a multidisciplinary consulting firm specializing in civil engineering, planning, environmental services, and surveying and mapping.

Founded in 1972, and with offices throughout Florida, the firm is dedicated to the development and prosperity of Sunshine State communities. Excellence in engineering and client service reward the firm with significant repeat business; numerous clients can trace their first projects to the earliest days of the firm.

Objectives

- Manage seasonal and cyclical volatility.
- Forecast needs with sufficient lead times to adapt.
- Implement planning software that managers will want to use.
- Make decisions based on facts.
- Even as projects grow larger and more complex, continue to deliver them on time and within budget.

Solution

- Planifi Project Analyzer resource and financial planning software results.
- Planning has jumped from a week at a time to months in advance.
- Significant capital investments are based on reliable forecasts.
- Client-requested schedule changes are accommodated with ease.
- Resource allocation considers individuals' skill levels.
- Resource planning prevents double- and triple-booking.
- PMs and firm executives are making more informed course corrections.
- Total firm profitability is stronger despite market volatility that could erode profits.

“This is one of the best products I have seen in my working career that answers the question, ‘Are you making money or are you not?’”

**-Tim Nicoulin
CFO**



Strong planning reinforces a reputation for reliability and performance; business development benefits

Wantman Group project managers and executives have been quick to abandon the spreadsheets they used to use for planning.

“This Planifi software is easy to use and project managers see how it benefits them, so we don’t have to twist their arms to adopt it.”

An improved ability to plan and execute work reinforces the firm’s reputation. “You’re only as good as your last completed project,” Nicoulin said. “If you don’t provide service, you don’t stay in the top echelon of the business.”

Adapting to schedule changes

“Recently the state delayed the start of a major roadway engineering job two months,” Nicoulin said. “We only had to change three start dates in the software and everything else in the plan changed accordingly!”

“Nobody believed me when I said that’s all you need to do,” Nicoulin said. “A man who had used different software at another firm said it was not possible. This Planifi software really is better.”

The key to successful project management

“I don’t care if you’re an architect or a civil engineer or what have you, you can only control what is yet to come between now and the end of the job,” Nicoulin said.

“If you see where things stand while you’re still in the design stage, you can correct for a minimal amount of money. So the earlier you find out you have a problem, the more likely you are of correcting it to have a favorable outcome.”

By forecasting survey work months in advance instead of weeks, Wantman Group had time to purchase, equip and staff trucks instead of leasing and subcontracting, improving quality and reducing costs 78 percent.

Thinking forward

In addition to capital purchases such as survey trucks and a \$130,000 scanner, Planifi Project Analyzer allows firm principals to make informed decisions about personnel.

“I love the scenarios,” Nicoulin said. “I watch people’s eyes when they realize what would happen if we win these big engineering jobs and need to deliver them. We might find out we need 30 new employees!”

“This software helps you think forward,” Nicoulin said. “I haven’t seen anything that allows you do that.”

The bottom line

Nicoulin said, “This is one of the best products I have seen in my working career that answers the question, ‘Are you making money or are you not?’ That’s what you need to know in the middle of a job. You guys have hit the nail on the head in a simple and easy way with a great user interface.”

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