

CLIENT Profile



Shane Meaker went back to estimating with spreadsheets when he joined Cougar Companies. That lasted about one month...



SOFTWARE

“It’s a breeze to use and it helps us win more jobs.”

Mr. Meaker, Chief Estimator for Cougar Companies since 2017, had used B2W for 10 years with his previous company. “As soon as I started with Cougar, I said, we need Estimate, or there’s no way we were going to be successful and grow the way we want to,” he explains. Cougar had already been reviewing B2W Estimate and, within a week, purchased three licenses.

“In my career, Estimate is one of the best tools I’ve ever had in terms of making my job easier,” says Mr. Meaker.

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Faster bidding supports 5X revenue growth

“It’s amazing how quickly we can complete an estimate with precise accuracy,” Mr. Meaker says. “A project that would take two days with spreadsheets takes half a day in Estimate.” When final accounting is done, actual costs are right on the money for nine out of ten projects and very close on the tenth, he adds.

That speed and quality have helped the site and utility division increase revenue from less than \$10 million in the first year to more than \$40 million five years later. Projects span civil, site, utility and specialized concrete work. Division bids are typically in the \$5-20 million range but can be as small as \$1 million.

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Hitting the ground running with B2W Estimate

Cougar Companies began turning out bids in four weeks after purchasing B2W Estimate. Mr. Meaker says estimators not familiar with the software can be trained in about 4-8 weeks. His project managers also become proficient working in the program and managing change orders within a couple of months.

Mr. Meaker recommends that contractors build a solid cost database at the beginning. That took his company about three weeks. "The setup is a key to succeeding with B2W Estimate," he says. "If you put in the effort and get it correct up front, you hit the ground running, and it becomes easy to leverage all of the powerful estimating features."

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Tailoring bid data to guide the operations team

Mr. Meaker generates three reports in B2W Estimate when a bid is won and it's time to turn the job over for planning and production.


“It’s easy to give project managers, superintendents and foremen all the information they need about how the job was bid, so we avoid confusion and questions during the build,” he explains. “I also have flexibility to tailor the reports according to what I want each group to see on projected costs, labor, materials, equipment utilization or production quantities.”

Takeoff and Spectrum accounting integration

Easy integration with Trimble takeoff software and the Spectrum accounting program augments B2W Estimate at Cougar Companies. Mr. Meaker routinely pulls digitized quantities for pipe run lengths, excavation depths and other variable into estimates, saving considerable time. For some estimates, the takeoff and estimating software combination can save up to 60 hours versus calculating and entering the data manually.

The company also exports bid data from B2W Estimate and moves it seamlessly to the accounting system. “B2W has a lot of experience integrating with Spectrum and they helped us nail this down right away,” says Mr. Meaker.





High performance on the B2W Cloud

Cougar originally hosted B2W Estimate on its own servers but switched to the B2W Cloud in late 2020. A better option for remote login during the Covid pandemic was the impetus. “With permission, anybody can now access Estimate easily and securely from anywhere,” says Mr. Meaker. “We don’t have to worry about performance, access, security or back-end technology updates.”

The experience with the B2W Cloud then prompted the company to move to Cloud hosting for all applications, including its Spectrum accounting system.

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Second-to-none support that is interactive too

Mr. Meaker calls B2W implementation and technical support capabilities second-to-none.

“They know their stuff when it comes to the software, but they’re really interested in listening to questions and suggestions from someone like me who is using it in the real world,” he explains. “I appreciate bouncing ideas back and forth. Sometimes we uncover a better way to do something that neither of us would have come up with on our own.”

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Based in Fort Myers, Florida, Cougar Companies has over 200 employees and completes a wide range of projects throughout the southwest portion of the state, including:

- Vertical and horizontal concrete construction
- Site preparation
- Underground utilities
- Excavation
- Concrete cutting and demolition
- Lidar drone reports and calculations

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