Full Service Landscape Firm Grows 10 Fold

Akehurst Landscape Service was founded in 1876 and became an Asset customer in 1996.

The Challenge

What problems were you having that motivated you to look for a new software solution?

After using manual systems for 120 years we found ourselves in a position where this was no longer an option. Our office manager—who had been with the company for 27 years—was retiring. In addition to finding a suitable replacement, we realized we needed a complete "one-stop-shop" software solution that would simplify our business processes and procedures. We saw that the right integrated software solution would allow for uniformity, accuracy, and easier training, among other things.

Because of our growth and use of manual systems, we were challenged with many critical issues. Job costing was time-consuming and difficult. Billing was at times inaccurate, late, or missed entirely. Extra work was often not tracked and billed. Our manual accounting and reporting systems were more prone to errors. Tracking of project profitability and other vital measures was virtually impossible. Office staff turnover was costly in terms of gaps, potential errors, and downtime during training.

The Process

How did you go about selecting new software? How long did the process take and who was involved?

Faced with these challenges, we decided it was time to investigate business management software to assist us in improving operations. Our search was extensive. Over a 3-4 year period, a selection team consisting of management, administration, and sales personnel evaluated at least 12 software solutions, including national off-the-shelf business management products as well as four software packages designed specifically for landscape businesses.

During this search we looked at: Asset, Peachtree, QuickBooks Pro, CLIP, Timberline, Real World, Doane, Slice, and UDS. Our goal was to find the perfect solution that would handle all of our needs for accounting, payroll, banking, tax reporting, daily activities, profit/loss analysis; would standardize our estimating process; and would be compatible with our then current papered system. Asset and Timberline were the finalists.

The Solution

How did you decide? What did Asset have that the others didn't?

Asset was the only solution that did everything we needed and was flexible enough to be compatible with our current systems. Asset, with Estimate Anywhere, was the clear winner because it:

- Delivered a single solution that manages projects from the start to end — first sales call to final invoice and everything in between — including the general ledger and balance sheets
- Allowed full customization and was easily adaptable to the way we already did business—where other choices were not. Asset let us print forms and reports that looked exactly like the paper documents we were already comfortable using.
- Offered more capabilities beyond what we needed immediately so it gave us room to grow.
- Managed all aspects of our business, as needed. For example, other choices didn't offer payroll (which we needed). Those packages required us to also purchase a third-party payroll system
- Made it easy for us to train new employees because there was a process for every position

The Implementation

How would you describe the implementation process?

Our initial process for implementation was less than successful as we attempted to do it on our own. After engaging the support and training of Include® Software's team, we were able to successfully implement Asset. Because of Asset's capabilities and enhancements, we see the implementation phase as an on-going process.

The Results

How has Asset saved your company money?

With Asset, the company was able to accurately bill customers for all work performed, track costs precisely by project, and reduce the overall workload for the in-house administrative staff. Most importantly, it provided added transparency and accountability for the entire organization. These efficiencies translated into real savings and added profits for us.

Since 1876
AKEHURST
Where great landscapes begin!

Company Information

Website
http://www.akehurst.com/

Location
Joppa, Maryland

Employees
100+

Locations Using Asset
Single Location with remote access

Segments
Landscape Design/Build-Commercial & Residential, Landscape Maintenance-Commercial & Residential, Interior Plantscaping, Snow Removal-Commercial & Residential