



No Soft Option

December 2011

*Construction software has emerged as an essential investment for construction companies aiming for better and faster project outcomes, finds **Charu Bahri**.*

To more hard sells required for software in the construction industry - the fast pace and competitive nature of today's construction projects necessitate high-tech help in the form of software to take care of every stage of the construction process, from design to planning, supervision, management of the other aspects of the business and keeping tabs on the movement of key performance indices. Solutions are increasingly being recognised for their ability to help organisations complete projects faster, and thereby improve bottom lines.

What's on offer?

ERP solutions are helping construction companies better manage limited resources. When coupled with dedicated construction management software, they give companies an edge for more efficient operations. Companies like LOK Housing & Constructions Ltd and IRB Infrastructure Developers Ltd are also turning to Business Intelligence (BI) software (see box) to enhance decision-making at each stage of the construction process, like site mobilisation, commencement of construction financial requirements, construction and handover. According to Sanjay Mehta, CEO, MAIA Intelligence, "BI software is helping clients in construction face challenges arising from a tight liquidity scenario and dependence on data from disparate sources. The solution mitigates the cost and risk of misinterpreting data and making incorrect decisions."

Opportunities galore

Mehta estimates the market for BI solutions to be expanding at the rate of 20 per cent, compounding year on year.

Business Intelligence (BI) Software

BI solutions pull business-critical information into a single interface for comparison, analysis and decision support. This bird's-eye view of the movement of key performance indicators (KPIs) in real time, over a week, month or the total project period, supports management decisions. KPIs of interest to construction companies include:

- Percentage of construction and demolition waste recycled
- Sq. m price
- Actual construction time/cost
- Actual vs. planned construction hours
- Work intensity (man hours per sq. m)
- Cost per km
- Net project revenue per employee
- Staff turnover
- Actual working hours
- Commercial vehicle movements
- Equipment malfunction/downtime, etc.

Besides a single dashboard supporting decision-making, the process is further supported by modules facilitating slicing-n-dicing, drill-down, charting, a host of reporting options, alerts and triggers, trend analysis, etc. "Visibility into project performance is the key to staying on top of challenging situations," says Sanjay Mehta, CEO, MAIA Intelligence. "Decision support software, like 1KEY BI from MAIA Intelligence, is designed to speed up workflow completion and increase productivity by consistently presenting adequate data on one platform to support all aspects of the operations of a construction company."

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