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iSqFt AGC Network

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iSqFt AGC NETWORK

THE NEED

The plan room services that AGC (Associated General Contractors) chapters provide to their membership can be time consuming and costly due to traveling to a physical plan room. iSqFt enables AGC members to conveniently view plan room projects 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the member's home or office location via the internet.

Thousands of currently bidding projects are available for review. This is accomplished by bringing many quotes together in reduced amount of time, allowing estimating directly from electronic blueprints. This allows contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and vendors to exchange information more efficiently. The iSqFt Toolbox also enhances the use of the plan room by providing project search and query capabilities to identify projects that meet the specific criteria of the user.



FIGURE 1 iSqFt AGC NETWORK

THE TECHNOLOGY

iSqFt is comprised of four main parts and is in affiliation with the AGC chapter. Internet Plan Rooms are built into the iSqFt system. These plan rooms are accessible to the public, and feature project information that is typically harvested in a local market area by an association or local trade group. The plan rooms are jointly owned by iSqFt and the related association. Access to these public plan rooms is granted on a local or regional basis and part of the fees generated are returned to the local or national group involved.

For the subcontractor, supplier, vendor or other interested party, iSqFt has developed a Project Desktop. This screen is secure and password protected, and will allow the user to access information from any number of Construction Offices, as well as from the built in Internet Public Plan Rooms. Users can actually measure blueprints on-line and they



have the ability to create a complete and detailed estimate for materials and labor. Using the iSqFt Toolbox or the more powerful Buildware Pro, even novice users can measure the electronic blueprints on-screen, and then transfer the related components into the built in Excel compatible workbook. These computerized estimating tools are easy to use, and may be used with traditional paper blueprints as well.

The iSqFt Construction Office (CO)

Featuring the unique and proprietary compression technology, the owner of each CO can expect subs and suppliers with only a dial-up modem connection, to be able to download full size blueprints in less than one minute. Once downloaded the user can measure and create highly detailed material and labor estimates, on-line, without ever reducing the documents to paper. Those who need the full size paper prints, can order plans on-line for next day delivery, or simply file-print a full size, to scale, blueprint, using a standard 8x11 paper.

Collaboration features include a document management system that empowers the user to upload and distribute any type of document, specifying the security levels for each document. The real time collaboration tools enable the users to setup meetings on-line, and allow all attendees to view the same print or specification document while it is being marked up in real time.

As addenda are posted, or documents are changed, the system generates an automatic email and fax message to all those subs, suppliers and vendors who are affected by the change.

The invite to bid is accomplished by the CO owner accessing his phonebook of subs and vendors online. Once the desired subs and vendors are identified, a fax is sent via the Internet as well as an email message to the appropriate vendor. There is no charge for the faxes up to 300 per project / per month. CO owners may reach out and locate subs and vendors from the vast database available through iSqFt.

The Project Desktop

Subcontractors, vendors and suppliers will use their own project Desktop to locate new bidding opportunities, to locate new potential customers and to manage their relationships with existing customers (CO owners). They will use their desktop to download plans, and then using the iSqFt Toolbox, save the plans on their own hard drive in a project folder. Once downloaded the Toolbox allows the user to actually measure the print on-screen, and then transfer the area/linear/count/volume measurements directly into the built in Excel compatible workbook.

Through the scrolling window built into the individual desktop, the user will receive notices of invite to bid, new addenda issued and other pertinent information about these tools.

THE BENEFITS

- Easy access to project information provided by AGC
- Reduction in cost of copying and shipping blueprints



- Technical consideration
 - Data compatibility (Ex. Excel compatible spreadsheet)
 - Reduction in usage of hard drive and disk space
- 24hr accessibility without the limitation of location and time schedule

STATUS

Purchasing of membership is possible through Internet at <http://www.isqft.com>.

iSqFt has agreements with the Alabama, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee AGC chapters to provide iSqFt/AGC Internet Plan Rooms. The Carolina's chapter has agreed to move forward and California has signed a letter of intent for services. iSqFt is in various stages of discussions with approximately 30 additional chapters.

BARRIERS

Costly investment on computer equipment such as plotters, computers in site offices, and network establishment may cause the companies with limited budget to hesitate being an ISqFt member.

POINTS OF CONTACT

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REFERENCES

1. ISqFt Web site: <http://www.isqft.com>

REVIEWERS

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