



Exclusively Construction, Increasingly Global

By Derek Leaver, Chief Executive, COINS

With COINS' recent announcement of the acquisition of Shaker Computer and Management Inc., based in Latham, New York, COINS has substantially added to its worldwide operational capabilities.

COINS is the established leader in the provision of solutions for the construction industry in the UK, with a third of the top 100 construction and house building companies as clients. There is also a significant client base in Eire, where COINS opened an office earlier this year to add to existing offices in Australia, Asia, and Russia. Now, in the US, COINS incorporates Shaker (to be renamed under the COINS brand) in Latham and the existing COINS business in Dallas.

Shaker, the original author of the COINS software, established in 1978, has over 250 clients throughout the United States representing \$20 billion in construction annually, with a team of 60 supporting the operation and additional development capability in Ukraine. The Dallas company is focused on the provision, support and training of 3D design systems for the construction, house building and services industries.

This acquisition is another step in COINS' strategy to provide solutions across the worldwide construction industry, from localised and/or specialist firms to international concerns that require an integrated system to support their global requirements. Increasingly the benefits of COINS will be offered through the principles of 'Software as a Service' (SaaS) allowing clients to access COINS via the internet and not be concerned with IT hardware.

'All major or ambitious construction industry boards not using some aspect of COINS expertise within their business should really consider why they are not.'

There is a great deal of synergy between the two companies, and each one brings areas of specialisation as well as geographic location. While COINS has evolved to focus primarily on General Contractors and House Builders in the UK, Shaker has specialised in Mechanical Services Contractors, although both already have clients in each other's areas of specialisation. The combined client base includes some of the largest construction companies in the world, many operating internationally either through their own offices or via joint ventures. COINS is uniquely placed to support the requirements created from different work practices, legislation and currencies.



▲ Shaker Office, Latham, New York.

Dick Werner, founder of Shaker who will remain as Chairman of the Latham business puts it like this: 'With some of the best product and industry knowledge in the world, supported by some of the most advanced technical skills, we can really offer our clients something special. As well as working almost round the clock on their behalf in so many different time zones, we will also deploy our best people around the world to meet their particular needs.'

Larry Sullivan, COINS Chairman concludes, 'Our Construction Industry specific IT expertise now exceeds 2,200 man years. We think that is unrivalled in any other individual IT or professional services company. All major or ambitious construction industry boards not using some aspect of COINS expertise within their business should really consider why they are not.'

Gladedale Consolidates Growth

By Roger Vaux, Business Development Manager COINS.

Over a four year period Group Executive Chairman Remo Dipre and Chief Executive David Gaffney have led the growth of The Gladedale Group from a regional house builder based in Epsom to being one of the top ten UK house building and property development groups. Build volume is now up to 3000 houses p.a., turnover has reached £500m and profits have risen tenfold, which makes Gladedale one of the fastest-growing house builders in the UK.

Much of the growth has been achieved by acquisition of other firms – all of which had different commercial and financial systems and IT set ups. To consolidate its growth, the company has recently restructured into three Divisions – Central, Southern and Northern – and now wants to have a common financial and commercial system across all divisions to achieve operational efficiencies and standard reporting that will support future growth.

The successful implementation of COINS within Premier Homes and Manor Kingdom (Southern) over a six-week period has led to the decision to roll out the full COINS House Building suite of modules across all three divisions of Gladedale.

The reporting functionality available in COINS, such as the standard on-screen Cost Value Reconciliation, Dashboards for



▲ Group Executive Chairman Remo Dipre and Chief Executive David Gaffney.

House Sales and the Management Accounts Pack, was key in their decision.

Commenting on the move, David Gordon, Group IT Director, said: 'The decision to standardise the COINS system across the group was a natural choice, particularly following the recent re-structure. Due to the rapid growth of the company, the group consisted of multiple systems, housed within different operating environments and each with different reporting capabilities.'

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007 Visits Windsor

By Lynn Cox, COINS Account Manager Major Accounts

Guests were shaken and stirred at the recent fundraising Ball held at Beaumont House, Old Windsor - organised by the Ladies COINS 3 Peaks Challenge team, to raise funds. Bond Girls and 007 heaven cocktails greeted over 200 guests as they arrived for the ball. This set the scene for a glittering evening introduced by MC Jez O'Donnell, who led a lively auction after dinner. Nearly £10,000 was raised due to generous donations including some from Arsenal Football Club, Stoke Park Club, Red Sky Sailing and Wentworth Business Systems. Dancing was to the fantastic London Swingphonia Band who had everyone on their feet. The event was suitably closed by a visit from the man himself (or so he said!).

The evening raised in total £16,000 and it was clear that the event was obviously enjoyed by all the guests. Following the event the girls went on to raise a grand total of £38,000, securing the place for COINS as the top fundraising company and top fundraising team for themselves.

Following the success of this year's event, the date for the COINS Ball 2008 is set for **26th April** and it will again be held at Beaumont House, Old Windsor. For further information please contact Pauline Sargent on 01753 501078.

▲ From Left: The COINS Ladies, The Simons 'Boys', Phil Andrews IT Director, Geoffrey Osborne with party, Peter Francis, MD of Windsor Homes with party.

Skanska McNicholas Replaces the North London Gas Infrastructure

By Yan Llamas, Product Development Manager

The North London Gas Alliance (NLGA) is a single delivery team comprising National Grid and Skanska McNicholas Plc. Together they are charged with replacing the gas infrastructure (some 3200km of gas mains) across the North London and East Anglian regions - a contract valued at circa £560 million over the initial minimum 8-year period - a sizable project.

With a contract so large, a key area for Skanska McNicholas to address for the Alliance was Cost Value Reconciliation (CVR) - comparing costs incurred with value added to the contract (to be billed to the client). They recognised that on long-term contracts such as this, it was essential to match revenue to costs over the period of the contract so avoiding cash flow problems by matching the timing of the revenue with the costs and providing robust management information with regard to the contract trading profitability.



▲ The North London Gas Alliance (NLGA) gas infrastructure replacement project.

For NLGA the CVR needed to be done at the activity level street by street, super project by super project, zone by zone and then aggregated at company (i.e. total contract) level. Prior to installing COINS and the CVR module, this was taking up to 5 man-days every month, involving up to eighteen Excel spreadsheets with the CVR report produced manually at the end of the process.

With some modifications to the contracting CVR Dashboard template, the COINS solution enabled Skanska McNicholas to drill down from company level to for example the metres of pipe laid on a specific super project, and to compare actual costs against forecast at any level - reporting required by parent company Skanska UK.

One of the first tasks was to run the new CVR software retrospectively to reconcile the previous manual CVRs to the system-produced data. One result of this was to reveal errors in the manual CVRs (for example in the percentage value to be billed per the contract) enabling the Alliance to increase the reported earned value.

Thus the Skanska McNicholas project team have already begun to deliver benefits in the time saved on preparing the CVRs, improved data integrity and clarity of revenue earned. The team has already begun to work on Phase 2 with COINS, which will include PDF printed versions of the CVR, and improved browser and administration facilities.

Ben Gandee, Commercial Manager for the NGLA commented, 'We are delighted with what has been delivered so far, so much so that the Phase 2 enhancements we have identified will be given priority in the bids for IT budget next year.'

Skanska McNicholas is a national service provider delivering major infrastructure projects and programmes in the utilities, rail and renewable energy markets.

COINS Introduces Workflow

By Paul Stewart-Smith, Director of UK Operations

People are most productive when they are doing the things they are good at - thinking, communication, creating. They are least productive - and error prone - when they are involved in boring, repetitive processes.

The opposite is true of systems. Businesses are therefore most efficient when they have the balance of the three key resources of people, processes and systems properly integrated and focussed on their strengths:

- People developing and implementing processes and new ways of working
- Processes which optimise quality, consistency, timeliness and governance/audit
- Systems which facilitate the way people work by automating the core processes

With the introduction of **Workflow** COINS brings the benefits of this integration to its users. By creating workflows within their COINS system, customers can automate routine but essential processes such as invoice approvals, expense forms processing, purchase orders and site requisitions, freeing costly people resources to focus on improving and managing the business.

The new workflow module uses the Activity Workbench in COINS. It can also however use Microsoft Outlook as its messenger service and task manager. The Finance Director could then for example approve an invoice via an e-mail link which would automatically change the status in COINS from "on hold" to "approved" without any further manual intervention.

The workflow works in conjunction with the COINS Document Management System, enabling scanned documents and documents containing unstructured data to be managed by the workflow task management.

A further level of integration and automation can be achieved through linking with COINS-etc, the electronic trading hub for the construction industry. Thus the whole procurement process from placing the purchase or site requisition to approval and payment of the invoice can be electronically transacted.

Of course these kinds of benefits don't come without effort, and in the case of workflow the main effort required is in defining and documenting the processes, authorisations and groups that the workflow will automate. Consultants from the COINS Business Intelligence Team can support this and the implementation of the workbench as well as training the customer's technical staff in the use of the toolkit. Once the workflow module is installed, the toolkit can be used by the customer's own technical staff to reconfigure it for changes in the process, groups or authorisations - even on a temporary basis to cover holidays etc.

Most customers who have so far implemented the workflow have started with a relatively simple process - but one which happens many, many times every day - such as invoice approvals to realise and demonstrate quick but real benefits and to let their technical staff familiarise themselves with the toolkit.

COINS Shaker News

By Cathy Terwilliger, Sales & Marketing Director COINS Shaker



EMCOR has been working in collaboration with COINS in the US to develop a wireless mobile device.

Called 'Mobile Technician', it provides field service personnel with timely access to critical visit, site, equipment, and tasking data. 'Mobile Technician' allows them to capture all completed work on the device and transmits information about the visit to the back office for real time status updates.

Field trials have just been completed with a company-wide roll-out planned by end 2008. EMCOR will benefit from quicker and more accurate billing, better information to customers about work in progress, and increased productivity and more efficient processing of billings and payroll in the back office.

COINS is also working in development partnership with EMCOR to develop fully functioning Purchase Card Processing - Pcard. EMCOR intend to replace the issuing of orders for material purchases by field staff for selected vendors. Field staff will be able to swipe the card to pay for their purchases; this pays the vendor and imports the transaction into COINS.

EMCOR Facilities Services is a subsidiary of EMCOR Group, Inc., a Fortune 500® leader in mechanical and electrical construction, energy infrastructure and facilities services.



DooleyMack had 9 databases of valuable information that were largely unprotected. They required a solution that would replicate data in real time over the internet for storage at a separate site. With support from COINS they have successfully implemented Fathom Replication system to achieve this.

Progress Fathom Replication automatically replicates a local Progress database to remote Progress databases running on one or more machines. It offers users the ability to keep Progress databases identical while also providing a hot standby in case a database fails.

DooleyMack Constructors provides a wide variety of construction management and general contracting services for commercial, industrial, and institutional projects, specializing in Construction Management at Risk. Its projects range from public schools and performance arts centres, to condominiums and health care centres.



Brickman had developed and used an in-house Human Resource Information System (HRIS) based on multiple Microsoft® Access databases to track its 6,000 employees and manage a wide variety of benefit programs. Some types of Human Resource data had to be entered in five places.

Brickman approached COINS Shaker to see if there was a solution that would ensure they would save processing time and enjoy greater accuracy by reducing the number of entries required. It was key to Brickman that their solution should integrate with the COINS payroll and accounting.



▲ EMCOR facility.

COINS Shaker were able to put forward The Human Resource Suite, developed specifically for the construction industry, which had some key attractions for Brickman - the ability to track an extremely variable work force as well as comply with regulations so mitigating the dangers inherent to construction, in terms of both safety and litigation. The complete suite consists of five components: Base Human Resource, Benefits Management, Applicant/Employee Tracking, Safety Administration, and Time & Attendance - Brickman chose to license all five components.

The project focused on base human resource information (i.e., Employee Information, Employee Relations, and Training & Development) and Benefits Management. A major part of the implementation project was conversion of data from their old system for use in the new database which required the focused attention of Senior Programmer Analyst Camilla Goering of COINS Shaker together with Brickman HRIS Administrator Barbara Andrews and Warren Heins, Brickman's Technology Director.

Barbara Andrews commented: 'It is great to finally have an integrated HRIS/Payroll system. Moving from our home-grown system to COINS Human Resource was a huge project. COINS Shaker and Brickman worked closely together for over a year on the consolidation, conversion and implementation of the HRIS system. We successfully went live on October 1, 2006. Some challenges are still ahead and we look forward to continuing to work with COINS Shaker to enhance the HRIS system to include such things as COBRA administration.'

Lemonia Evans, the COINS Shaker Project Team Leader for Brickman, praised the project team, saying: 'Brickman was excellent to work with, very responsive about supplying information and loading programs as they were delivered. Camilla's experience and knowledge of Human Resources were also a key benefit to the project. The conversion project was complex, but now all the elements have come together and Brickman is enjoying the benefits of a comprehensive, integrated human resources solution.'



▲ From Left: Carol Smith- Payroll Supervisor, Warren Heins - Technology Director and Barbara Andrews - Benefits Administrator for the Brickman Group Ltd.

The Brickman Group Ltd. (Brickman) of Gaithersburg, is a leader in the commercial landscape industry, with over 6,000 employees and operations in 23 states and a COINS client since 1990.



COINS Shaker Conference 2007

COINS Shaker is running its annual conference from 16th to 18th September at The Desmond in Albany, New York. COINS customers are invited to 'Explore and Discover' the world of COINS. We will be focusing on offering attendees the opportunity to consider the use of COINS to improve business decisions.

There will be a chance to learn more about the opportunities the recent acquisition presents as well as ample time to meet with the COINS team including some of the Directors from COINS in the UK. Come and join us to network and get up to date on what is happening within COINS and IT in the US construction sector.

Details and registration are available in the news and events section at www.shakercomputer.com

◀ The Desmond Conference Centre in Albany, New York.

COINS Shaker Product News

CIM available in COINS-Ti

COINS Information Manager (CIM), an electronic document management system is now available with COINS-Ti - an early benefit of the recent acquisition is that products will increasingly become available worldwide. CIM brings image management and workflow as integrated functionality with Ti enabling users to easily, and in some cases automatically, access documents related to data that they are currently viewing in a COINS-Ti module session.

Andy Martin, Financial Systems Manager of Bluestone - a user of CIM in the UK - is quoted as saying: 'The savings in retrieval times and the cost of external scanning alone made CIM a winner all round.' Harry Toor, Systems Accountant, Lovell also commented: 'We expect to achieve a direct return on our investment within 12 to 18 months.'

The most widely used function of CIM is to provide a link between the financial modules of COINS and the associated financial documents, for example Purchase Ledger and Sales Ledger invoices.

Project Management

New product development continues apace with the new COINS Shaker Project Management module in beta testing with **Infrastructure Services, Inc.**, and scheduled to be completed for commercial release for the US market in September 2007. The project management module integrates with COINS to help project personnel manage costs, documents and activities. Core to the system is a multi window dash board which can give simultaneous status on tasks, requests for information and submittals.

Tim Herbert, Infrastructure's President commented, 'I am very passionate about getting things done in the most efficient manner possible and having the right tools in place to get the job done. When I heard that COINS Shaker was developing a Project Management Module I was immediately interested and saw it as an opportunity to help streamline our processes.'

Tim chose to participate in the beta program so he could learn as much about the software as possible and get a tool he felt was extremely useful into the hands of his Project Managers and Project Assistants. Tim and his team have welcomed the opportunity to have input on the completed product as have we, at COINS Shaker; being close to customers during product development is key to releasing a successful solution.

Infrastructure Services, Inc., a Houston-based Heavy Highway Contractor has been a COINS customer for over 10 years.

Both these products will be showcased at the COINS Shaker conference in September.

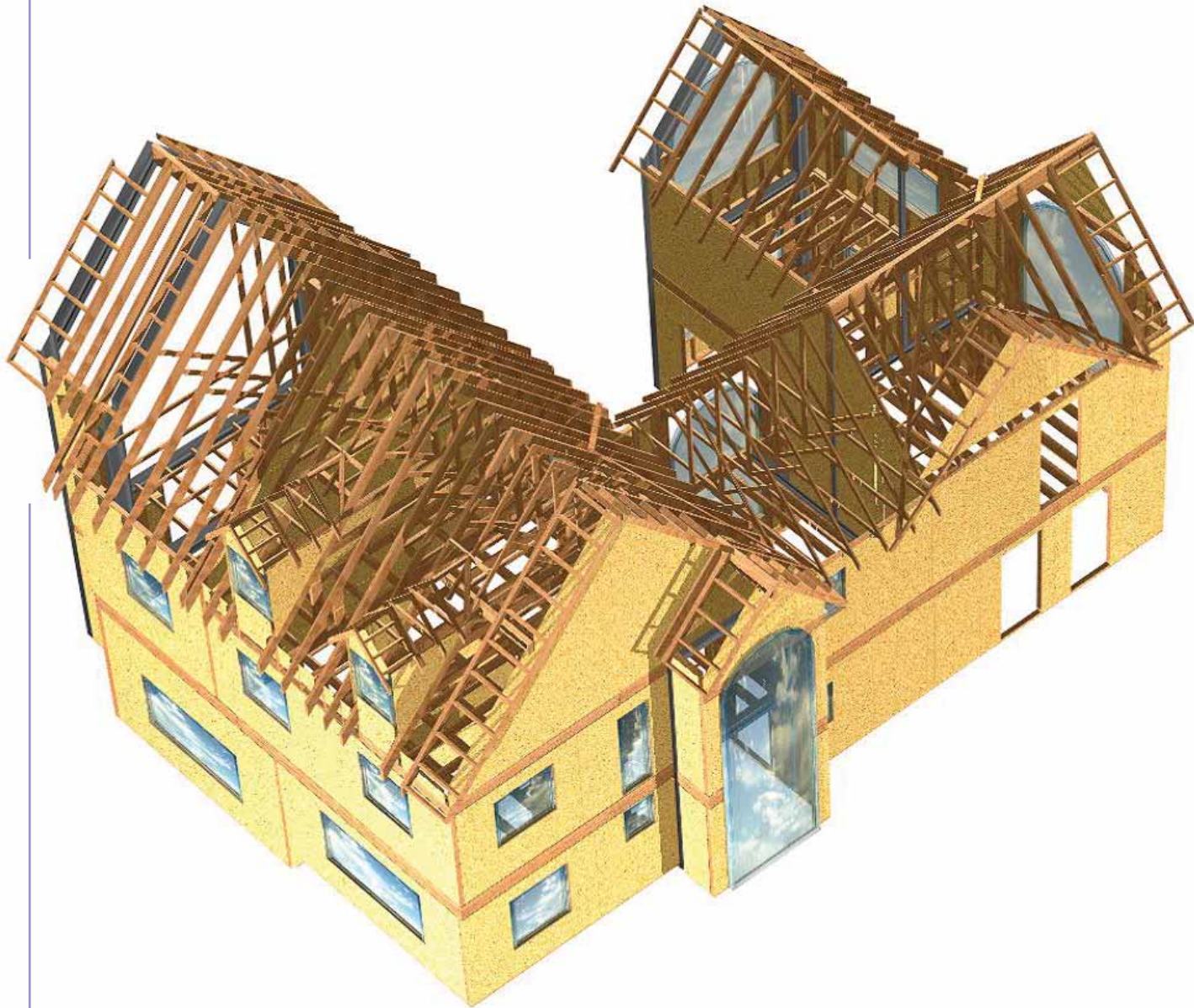
Introducing Framing 8

By Sharon Lechon, COINS VP Dallas Operations

COINS Dallas Texas, value added reseller of AutoDesk products, has announced availability of Release 8 of its Framing product. COINS Framing is fully compatible with and takes advantage of AutoCAD Architecture 2008, it has a number of new and improved features including annotation scaling and drawing compare. It is also compliant with Windows Vista.

COINS Framing works with AutoCAD to translate drawings into parts and material specifications for timber and steel frame buildings.

Further details can be found at www.ConstructionIndustrySolutions.com



▲ An example of timber frame design using Autodesk.

One Day, One House

By Cathy Terwilliger, Sales & Marketing Director COINS Shaker

Habitat for Humanity's 24 hour Blitz Build.

Hundreds of volunteers, including COINS Shaker employees and employees of its client, Eastern Heating & Cooling, Inc., joined forces to participate in Capital District Habitat for Humanity, Blitz Build 2007.

The objective - the monumental task of building a house in just 24 hours. The Blitz Build took place in Albany, New York from Saturday morning June 23 through Sunday June 24. After three years on the waiting list the new home owners were able to see their dream realised in just 24 hours.

Fred Giardenelli, President of Eastern Heating & Cooling, said, 'The Blitz Build was an amazing project that involved the community pulling together with many different trades all working closely to complete their part. Shelter is one of the most basic needs in life, and we were all excited to give back to the community in this way.'

The all-volunteer team performed a remarkable feat that required working alongside several other trades and overcoming obstacles not normally encountered on a typical project. Eastern Heating & Cooling also donated and installed the heating system for the 1,200 sq. ft. house. Capital District Habitat for Humanity's mission is to ensure that everyone in the community has a decent, affordable home. That mission is made possible through partnerships and the generosity of volunteers, sponsors, and donors and the contribution of the Habitat Homeowners through their labour.

Habitat for Humanity has been adopted as a beneficiary of the COINS 3 Peaks Challenge in 2008 - see page 6 or visit the event website www.coins3peakschallenge.com.



▲ From Left: COINS Shaker volunteers; Joan Brown, Cathy Terwilliger, Jason Squillace & Brian Fitzgerald.

The World is Flat

On the 6th July the COINS client focused team headed out to St. Petersburg to gain a first hand understanding of the development capability there. The group were introduced to the 63 staff in St. Petersburg Development facility, 20 working directly on COINS. Presentations were two way, the opportunity seized for all to learn more about COINS development and COINS customers from a project management, account management and sales perspective.

The expertise that had been built up over the past 7 years was evident to the UK group and there was an expectation within the next 18 months for there to be well over 100 people of similar calibre. Amongst the team qualifications a plethora of PHD's and Masters degrees was found: in Astro Physics, Hypersonic Flight, Cybernetics, Robotics, Complex machines, Mathematics, Actuarial, Computer Science and so on. Whilst impressive, a key question for the group was how is this relevant to the construction market?

Exploring this, Larry Sullivan expressed the following views, 'All good software creates value by compressing time. All markets operate to a set of rules (market and legislative) and workflows - all have the challenge of constantly improving service to their clients. To build systems to meet the challenges of the market and to keep abreast of and apply appropriately emerging technologies we are very sure that we need the very best intellectual capability.'



▲ Larry Sullivan, Chairman COINS addresses the Russian and UK teams.

Larry continued by quoting from *The World is flat* by Friedman* - 'There are very few issues of time, space and geography that can't be resolved through the intelligent use of information and communications technology.'

Whilst requirement capture and client engagement remains a key focus for the UK operation, taking full advantage of communication technologies - VOIP and video conferencing - the UK and Russian teams are able to communicate effectively. COINS can therefore take full

advantage of the intellectual, academic and problem solving skills of the Russian development team to effectively deliver new functionality for the COINS software.

There is also no doubt that industry knowledge and expertise cannot be overlooked and it was clear that this has been achieved as well - with the support of UK staff and clients there are now in Russia some 200 man-years of Construction "domain" expertise.

'There are very few issues of time, space and geography that can't be resolved through the intelligent use of information and communications technology.'



▲ From Left to right: Steve Jones, Chris Westbury, Lynn Cox, Mike James, Roger Vaux, Matthew Jones, Barbara White and Jim Nolan.

Chris Westbury, UK Projects Manager for COINS commented: 'It was excellent to meet the development team in St. Petersburg, put faces to names and understand their roles in COINS' development. It clearly demonstrated how the Russian team really do work directly with the UK team as if in the next room. They are committed to producing the best quality and functionality possible and are immensely proud of the work that they do. The enthusiasm and commitment of the team there is hugely encouraging. Matched by their staggering academic backgrounds, it makes for a promising future for the development of COINS.'

Alex Leonenko, COINS lead developer commented: 'We always welcome meetings with the COINS UK team; in this case it was especially interesting to hear from the sales and management team how the product we develop is practically used by various clients.'



▲ COINS Development Team, St. Petersburg, Russia.

*'The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century', by Thomas L Friedman

Ahead of the Trend in Ireland

By Barbara White, COINS General Manager Ireland

Many of the founders of the largest construction companies in the UK and the rest of the world can trace their roots back to Ireland. Well, the industry back in the 'auld country' is also doing pretty well.

According to official statistics, the construction industry in Ireland is growing at a faster rate than in any other EU country. In 2006 output grew over the previous year in volume by 10.3%, and is set for further substantial growth this year.

In 2000, one in every ten workers in the Irish economy worked in construction; by 2005, this had become one in eight, one of the highest rates in the developed world. Whilst it is likely that this growth will moderate over the next few years, the construction sector will continue to be a mass employer in Ireland.

Impressive though this is, some of COINS' Irish customers have shown even more spectacular growth. For example, John Sisk & Son - www.siskgroup.com - show in their latest published figures a growth of 29% in turnover over the previous year while Ascon Contractors - www.asconrohcon.com - are forecasting similar growth for 2007.

Having opened the Irish office in January this year, COINS is exceptionally well placed to understand and provide services to meet the needs of this growing market. After six months of touring the country and visiting the existing COINS customer base, the growing demand for our services is very evident. Our clients are showing a particular interest in areas such as HR, Plant and Reporting. We are also seeing a lot of interest from potential new clients. There is no doubt that for both existing clients and our prospective clients, our local presence, knowledge and expertise is important. One recent prospective customer rang to say: 'When I searched the web and saw there was an Irish office, I rang straightaway.'

You will be able to meet with the COINS team at IT Village Exhibition in Dublin, Stand 21 from the 20th to 22nd of September.

If you would like to make an appointment please call Pauline Sargent, COINS Event Manager, at the COINS UK office +44 (0)1753 501078.



Confucius Says

By Claud Brandt, COINS South East Asia



If you search Google for the 'US Construction Industry' it will tell you there are 156 million entries; for the UK 53 million. For Asia, however, the score is only 26 million entries. This of course may be partly due to the western bias of Google, but it also says something about the construction industry in the Far East.

For many years the Asian tiger economies have been heralded as targets for astonishing opportunity for construction companies. Despite huge investment however, none can yet claim to have succeeded in their growth goals – and many have downgraded their investment. Where the construction industry goes, IT investment will inevitably follow. Lack of growth in the short term has thus led many specialist IT construction companies to target their sights elsewhere. COINS has preferred to follow Confucius' teaching and philosophy, 'It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop' and as such has maintained a presence in the Far East since 1995.

Offices in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore have enabled the company to support local projects for some of its major international customers, including Downer Engineering, Bachy Soletanche and Laing O'Rourke (Barclay Mowlem), but growth in the region has been slow.

Patience finally paid off in 2005 with a major implementation in SembCorp Design and Construction, a subsidiary of one of Singapore's major publicly listed companies, SembCorp Industries.

As reported at the time, the implementation of COINS Financials and Procurement was completed in a very tight time frame, supported from COINS Australia and the UK. In 2007 the relationship has gone from strength to strength and the project has moved on to a second phase, the installation of Site Manager – Valuations. SembCorp is now really beginning to see the benefits of its investment in the COINS integrated system.

Mary Wong, the company's Contracts and Purchasing Manager said, 'COINS replaced two disparate systems and it's a huge productivity gain only having to enter data once and everyone sharing the same view of activities.'

Mary continued, 'Most of our procurement is done on site by the Quantity Surveyor. Using Site Manager - Valuations means they can enter the purchases directly and have an instant view of costs against budget. They have said this gives them a significant advantage in managing projects over the previous method.'

In the last year or so the construction industry in South East Asia has begun to pick up again with Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia now joining the traditional tigers - Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong - in a mini boom. Success in the region however will depend on building strong relationships over time through people with local knowledge and presence.



▲ COINS South East Asia Offices from left to right : 36th Floor Menara Citibank Tower, Kuala Lumpur; 31st Floor in Singapore; 25th Floor, Bank of China Tower, Hong Kong.

Downer Reports From Down Under

By Narelle Shipley, Branch Manager COINS Australia



Ray Dawson, Downer Queensland National Manager – Financial Systems, a major client of COINS Australia, has sent this report on how they have used COINS in their business and worked with COINS Australia to realise the benefits of the system for integrating acquired businesses:

'Some divisions of The Downer Group first became COINS users in May 2002. The Power division itself has grown rapidly over the past few years partly due to acquisitions, the most recent of which was the Stork Group in late 2003. Three major COINS implementations have been undertaken to consolidate the Downer and Stork business integration. These have been state-based divisional operations and were carried out in 2006 in Victoria and Western Australia with Queensland started in late May 2007.

The methodology for each implementation has been highly consultative supported by a project-focused group of system personnel. The business participation has been high and the resulting business analysis and training have assisted the implementation outcomes.

While the main objective is the clearly identified benefits of having all business operations on a common system, this also presented a great opportunity for the business to embrace the COINS Open Architecture Facilities Management module. The functionality, look and feel of the product has been well accepted. Management reporting has been improved and the flexibility of the COINS OA Version is a great bonus.



▲ Downer project team Melbourne Victoria & Brisbane, from left to right: Back Row: Amanda Braiden, Mike Shaw, Mark Torchia, Jon Cowan, Front Row : Peter Flett, Kirrell Wilson, Ray Dawson.



▲ Sydney-based Downer project team, from left to right: Back row: Marita Savea, Robert Sinagoga, Patrick Sultana, Front row: David Crighton, Nadine Mortimer.

We have enjoyed working closely with the Brisbane-based COINS team in each of these implementations.

Downer Engineering Power Pty Ltd (Power) is a division of Downer EDI Ltd operating in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. The broad profile of its contract work covers major electrical and mechanical installations including power stations, refineries and processing plants through to maintenance, service and asset management contracts.

Major House Builders Invest in HR

By Richard Vale, Commercial Manager, COINS House Builders and Developers



The construction industry has often been accused of lagging behind in its Human Resources practices. Perhaps because a large proportion of the workforce was subcontracted, HR didn't seem to be a business priority. Where IT was used at all for HR, it was based on generic systems supplied by specialist personnel software suppliers. If anything this tended to isolate the HR function even further from the core of the business.

Well times seem to be changing. Two of the UK's largest and most successful house builders are now committed to the use and development of the COINS Human Resources (HR) module.

In May 2007 Persimmon plc made the decision to implement the COINS HR module. This follows on from the successful 2006 implementation of the module at Barratt Developments.

Whilst one of the key drivers of their decisions was the need for a solution that integrated seamlessly with COINS Payroll, both have recognised that an HR solution which integrates with their business software brings other distinct benefits.

Basic personnel processes – holidays, sick leave, maternity benefit – can easily be standardised. Managing people however is driven by the unique needs of the business and the industry sector it is in – assessment, training, qualification, regulation.



Suzanne Chandler, Regional HR and Training Manager for Kings Oak, part of the Barratt Group comments, 'Implementation of COINS Human Resources was a challenge because of the relative newness of the module in comparison to other parts of COINS, but the business was convinced of the benefits that would be delivered by an integrated solution. We have worked closely with the COINS development team to ensure that the product will do what we need it to and the partnership has operated very effectively. We are now operating live with the COINS HR module and continue to work with COINS to develop further enhancements and reporting solutions. The benefits of the implementation are already being enjoyed, by HR staff and other employees alike, throughout the Barratt Group.'

Persimmon's IT Director, Rob Holden, and his team worked closely with Group HR Director Richard Latham to develop a statement of requirements prior to evaluating the COINS software. Rob says, 'We were not unhappy with our existing HR software but the need for a solution that worked seamlessly with the COINS payroll was an overriding consideration. We were pleased, if not surprised, to identify that the COINS product, out of the box, is a very close match to our requirements. I have stated before that the COINS software fits our business like a glove and I am confident that the HR module will add further to an already very strong product portfolio.'

Two other fast-growing and profitable house builders, McInerney and Weston Group have also already made the decision to implement COINS HR.



▲ Suzanne Chandler, Regional HR and Training Manager, Kings Oak, part of Barratt.

'We were pleased, if not surprised, to identify that the COINS HR, out of the box, is a very close match to our requirements.' Persimmon



Champagne CIS Awards

By Jim Etherton, COINS Product Manager

Customers, COINS staff and HMRC gathered together in early summer for the Special Interest Group meeting to review the first two months of operation of the new Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) for tax compliance on payments to subcontractors. Awards were made for the first successful customer go-lives.

Well done to Neil Florence of NG Bailey who was the first in the UK with package software to complete the electronic verification of subcontractors using COINS and Vani Thasan of Byrne Bros for the similar honour of being the first to submit a CIS300 monthly return using COINS – both were presented with a magnum of champagne courtesy of COINS.

Congratulations to runners up: For the electronic verification; Angela Root - Kier Group, Vani Thasan - Byrne Bros, John Painter - Hopkins Homes, Dominic Urand - Trant Construction, Andrea Cornwell - Kier Residential. For the monthly return; Neil Florence - NG Bailey, David Webb - Volker Stevin, Angela Root - Kier Group, Peter Bower - Morgan EST, Les Mandeville - Windsor Homes.

◀ Vani Thasan of Byrne Bros presented with his magnum by Jim Etherton.

Procurement Made 'eEasy'

By Matthew Jones, General Manager COINS-etc

Over the past few years COINS has been gradually adding its customer base and their suppliers to the COINS-etc community. It has mainly been used to date as a trading hub for the electronic exchange of supplier documentation and invoices.

However with the recently announced collaboration between COINS and Science Warehouse, COINS-etc users can really begin to see the productivity and efficiency benefits of e-commerce.

The technology to enable electronic trading has been available for many years. For the construction industry however, with many major specialist and general suppliers the main difficulty has always been the standardisation and cross referencing of index and catalogue numbers across suppliers.

With an advanced catalogue management capability and an established and growing user community, full e-commerce now becomes a reality for the construction industry with COINS-etc. This will potentially provide a huge competitive advantage for COINS customers as well as providing efficiency gains for their suppliers.

Many of the major contractors and house builders in the UK are using COINS and over 70 of the industry's largest suppliers are already signed up to trade electronically with them. The introduction of the COINS eCatalogue Centre alongside the COINS trading hub makes it easy for buyers to search through various on-line catalogues to find the right products and the best prices and drop the details onto their electronic orders.

Our market research identified Science Warehouse as the best-in-class provider for the advanced catalogue management capability we were looking for. COINS-etc now leads the way with an easy-to-use search facility

able to handle large volumes of complex product information, typical of the construction industry. The COINS e-catalogue solution matches COINS in robustness and scalability which is essential for our major clients.

An early adopter of the technology commented: 'It was very clear that the functionality offered by e-catalogue was far superior to the punch out method being used with the majority of suppliers. The ability to compare and search for product and the richness of the data simply improves the procurement process. Customers will benefit from availability of accurate cost price information on site, at the click of a button.' E-catalogue offers a more informed way of buying and the solution is one that users are familiar to work with.





Construction Industry's Greatest Fundraising Event

By Claire Greenwood, COINS Foundation Programme Manager

For the fifth year the COINS 3 Peaks Challenge event has exceeded expectations with more funds raised, faster finishing times and a greater number of teams participating. Most of you will be familiar with the format of the event by now – climb the three highest mountains in the UK in 24 hours. For the teams who participate it takes planning, courage, sheer willpower with both personal and team commitment.

In total a record 46 teams participated, all completing the challenge with 23 teams completing within 24 hours. A monstrous £359,000 was raised to support CARE International's projects throughout the world, which we believe makes the COINS 3 Peaks Challenge one of the largest sector-based fundraising action events in the UK.

The Director's Challenge was well attended on the final day of the event - less onerous than the full challenge – but nevertheless a challenge in its own right and a tremendous support, appreciated by the teams. COINS was delighted to welcome: Steve Coombes, Regional Director, Lovell Partnerships; Andrew Osborne, Group Corporate Development Director, and Phil Andrews, Director of IT, Geoffrey Osborne; Jackie Guinnane, Company Buyer, John Sisk; Michael Alden with wife Nanda, Commercial Director, Weston Homes; John Mackley with wife Dianne, Chairman, JT Mackley; Andrew Johnson, Millgate Homes and Ian Brown, Barclays Corporate.

Andrew Osborne, of Geoffrey Osborne observed: 'This year seems to have been a particular success on the fundraising front. The Directors Challenge is a good way for us to give very obvious support to the event and our teams - we will continue to be involved'.

At the evening reception, Larry Sullivan, Chairman of COINS reminded everyone that: 'more than 25,000 children die in the world every day, through lack of food and medicine - entirely preventable. However hard it might have been on the mountains for the teams, conditions are infinitely harder for impoverished and disadvantaged people throughout the world. If we are to consider ourselves a civilised society, it is entirely right that we should care and do something about this.'



▲ This year's highest fundraisers; COINS with £47,000; Lovell with £35,500, Osborne £22,500 and Bovis Land Lease with £16,000, and most regular participants; Kier Group, Osborne and Ringway - all awarded places on this year's project trip.

The challenge has now raised over £1 million all of which has been donated to CARE International. In 2008 the distribution of funds will widen to include Habitat for Humanity which builds homes for the homeless throughout the world and some project funds also to Stepping On which focuses on providing for disabled and disadvantaged children in the UK and overseas. Specific projects that are selected for our support will be construction projects that address the needs of impoverished and less privileged people around the world.

Our sincere thanks to all participating companies who were so successful in raising funds for the 2007 event.

Register NOW for 2008

You'll need to hurry if you want to participate in 2008 as many construction companies have already committed teams and entries are limited to prevent environmental damage. You can register online at www.coins3peakschallenge.com or contact Pauline Sargent: pauline.sargent@coins-global.com Tel: 01753 501078

Order News from COINS UK

By Mike James, Sales Director, COINS

The 'Shard of Glass', the super-tall skyscraper planned for construction at London Bridge, will be Project Managed by one of COINS' newest customers **Primus Build**.

Recently established to provide property and construction solutions across the range of residential, retail and commercial sectors in London and the South, Primus Build has also secured a contract with Acor valued at £8million to deliver a 120-bed hotel and adjacent 35,000 sq ft office block in Portsmouth.

Martin Tidd, MD, previously with Laing, Wates and most recently Multiplex, comments: 'We have established the company to fill a niche in the £5m-50m value range. Signing up to the COINS hosted solution means that we are adopting a best practice approach, where we can scale up our systems in line with anticipated business growth, without change.'

William Verry (Holdings) Ltd, renowned as a construction business in London has shown a significant and consistent growth trend over the last five years, in excess of 25% year on year, with plans to double in size by 2010. We are pleased to announce therefore that they have recently signed a six-year partnership agreement with COINS to implement and support their IT needs for Financials, Payroll, Procurement and Commercials.

ISIS Waterside Regeneration was established as limited partnership and launched at the Urban Summit in the autumn of 2002 with a £100m initial equity investment from AMEC Developments, Morley Fund Management's Igloo Fund which focuses on urban regeneration projects and the British Waterways. ISIS is now revitalising more than 170 acres of land in nine towns and cities across the UK.

ISIS is moving onto a hosted solution where its staff will have access to COINS from their offices, project locations or from home, enabling them to far more effectively manage the purchasing and invoice approval process.



▲ The 'Shard of Glass'.



Construction Gets Connected

By Matthew Jones, General Manager COINS-etc.

The COINS-etc product was launched late in 2004 and has seen rapid growth of 90% between 2005 and 2006; this trend is continuing into 2007. Today we are seeing construction transaction levels approaching one million per annum through COINS-etc. The number of national and regional suppliers joining the exchange has rapidly grown to 70 and there are now over 50 construction companies actively trading. This represents in the order of 500 trading connections, and positions COINS-etc as the leading electronic trading community within the construction industry.

The more suppliers in the chain, the greater the benefit to COINS customers who use COINS-etc in terms of productivity and competitive advantage. For suppliers, accessibility to their customers and ease of doing business with them are among the major benefits.

