



Construction firm unites workforce, speeds pace of business with cloud services

Customer: McClone Construction

Website: mcclone.net

Customer size: 275 employees

Country or region: United States

Industry: Construction

Customer profile

With a corporate office in El Dorado Hills, California, McClone Construction delivers structural concrete and concrete formwork services from six regional offices throughout the western United States.

Software and services

- Microsoft Office 365
 - Microsoft Exchange Online
 - Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus
 - Microsoft SharePoint Online
 - Skype for Business Online
- Hardware
 - Microsoft Surface Pro 3
 - Windows Phone

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“We’re no longer limited by technology—instead, we’re using Office 365 to become a more flexible, adaptable, successful organization.”

Rick Owens, Project/IT Manager, McClone Construction

McClone Construction builds concrete structures throughout the United States, which requires seamless work among dispersed teams. The company standardized on Microsoft Office 365 to support close collaboration through frequent video calls, easy access to email and calendars, and a consistent experience across devices. It has increased employee productivity and flexibility, so it can tackle more projects while maintaining its high standard of work.

A solid foundation for business success

From parking garages and reservoirs to hospitals and universities, McClone Construction knows concrete. The California-based company has spent 40 years building structures throughout the United States, gradually expanding its offices to Washington, Hawaii, Colorado, and Texas. Along the way, the company has fostered a tradition of excellence, not just in its projects but also in its culture of teamwork and continuous improvement.

McClone Construction recently moved from a divisional business model to an integrated operation so that it could take greater advantage of employees’ skill sets to form teams based on a project’s location and type of work. “Ours is a cyclical business, and when one office is

slow, another is often too busy to handle all the projects coming its way,” says Rick Owens, Project/IT Manager at McClone Construction. “By connecting our offices, we can tackle projects more effectively and achieve greater success as a comprehensive organization.”

Merging resources meant that the company needed to unify business processes across its former divisions. “In the past, engineers in our divisions used different ways of designing form systems, project managers followed their own methodologies, and workflows varied among teams,” says Owens. “We knew that uniting processes throughout the company would demand a lot more collaboration across offices than we’d ever done before.”

A new collaboration paradigm

Fostering the collaboration now expected of employees required giving them common technology. The company's divisions used a range of technology systems, so McClone Construction looked to simplify. It wanted a solution that would be easy to use and straightforward to administrate, one that included the videoconferencing, messaging, and productivity software needed for efficient collaboration among dispersed colleagues. "In the past, we didn't have much need to work across our offices, but the change in our business model caused us to take a careful look at how we could collaborate," says Owens.

As McClone Construction looked at the available technology choices, it also examined the solutions that it already had in place throughout its divisions. The company found that one division had adopted Microsoft Office 365 cloud-based services when the division replaced its aging in-house messaging infrastructure. "We already knew many of the ways in which Office 365 could help the company at large because our Northwest Division had experience with it," says Owens. "For instance, we liked using Microsoft Exchange Online so that we could avoid all the time-consuming system management that we'd endured in the past. But the biggest draw for companywide adoption was Skype for Business Online. We saw how it would give us video-calling and screen-sharing capabilities that would make it easier to conduct effective virtual meetings, without a lot of hassle to set them up."

Employees have embraced video calling to such an extent that McClone Construction has reduced costs. Says Owens, "We've already seen a savings of at least 10 percent in our mobile phone costs, plus a 5 percent

reduction in travel between offices, especially among upper management."

Greater productivity from anywhere

Using Office 365 helps McClone Construction be more agile as it juggles projects across the company. "It's much easier to establish a Skype for Business online call than to track down team members on their mobile phones," says Owens. "We use the presence indicator to see who's available and then just click to talk. Quickly finding project superintendents in the field and getting information to and from them without delays accelerates our pace of business."

The company has found that its virtual meetings to coordinate operations among its widespread offices are more effective now, due to the use of video calls rather than audio conference calls. "There's just something about seeing the people you're talking to," says Owens. "It's the closest you can get to an in-person meeting. Using Skype for Business Online, we see colleagues' expressions and gain a better understanding of the issues. We can get more done in less time because we also share screens so we're all looking at the same materials."

McClone Construction and its partners use Microsoft SharePoint Online to share information between companies. Internally, employees use it to maintain project team calendars and a single, easily accessible repository for engineering documentation.

In addition, employees use Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus and therefore have the same Microsoft Office programs available for use on a range of devices, including Windows Phones and Microsoft Surface

Pro 3 devices. Owens, for example, might work on project plans on his PC at the office, make changes to it from home on his Microsoft Surface Pro 3, and review colleagues' subsequent revisions from his smartphone on the way into the office. "Our employees can install Office programs on up to five devices, which really helps them stay productive when mobile," says Owens. "Our executives and managers in particular use programs such as Microsoft OneNote Online extensively."

Overall, Owens believes that the Office 365 components' built-in efficiencies have the greatest impact on the company's increased productivity. "We've significantly broadened our communication channels due to the Office 365 capabilities that are now at our fingertips," says Owens. "Plus, Microsoft constantly expands Office 365 functionality, and we get the immediate benefit from product improvements because we don't have to wait for the next upgrade cycle to take advantage."

Support for business growth

McClone Construction appreciates that using Office 365 makes it easier to add and remove employees as the company changes. "Right now we're experiencing significant growth that creates daily IT challenges, but we're able to onboard new employees right away, giving them what they need to immediately work together no matter where they're located, rather than taking days to get set up," says Owens. "And if we opt to open a new office, getting that new area up and running will take approximately half the time that it took before, from a technology perspective. We're no longer limited by technology—instead, we're using Office 365 to become a more flexible, adaptable, successful organization."