



Backgrounder: Corporate

CEO Marty Hilsenteger, an electrical contractor by trade, founded Singletouch in Calgary, Alberta in 1997. Having successfully built an electrical contracting business in nearby Red Deer, Hilsenteger was well aware of the challenges faced by contractors working in remote locations where industrial construction often takes place.

The dominant challenges were data capture and recording from the field, ensuring that information is accurately entered only once, and then properly reflected on invoices, reports and other requirements. Hilsenteger knew that expediting the paperwork, reporting and invoicing processes would enable contractors to more easily manage their cash flow and day-to-day business concerns.

Finding a solution proved difficult, as all the off-the-shelf software products then on offer were no more than accounting packages that did not take into consideration the real-world, on-site data-capture requirement and information flow from the field into the back office. Hilsenteger set out to develop a comprehensive solution beginning from the field and flowing into the office that would address the business concerns of contractors while expediting billing and fulfillment, alleviating the potential for transcription errors and reducing the amount of work for a contracting firm's accounting staff.

Singletouch initially offered its software to electrical contractors through both a Windows platform called Singletouch Office, and a web portal with a Citrix-based user interface called Singletouch Jobsite. This meant that the home office and the job site could both take advantage of the tool simultaneously, with real-time data available both on site and at the office. The solution easily integrates and shares data with traditional accounting, payroll and other reporting software in addition to generating its own customizable reports. Once data has been inputted, project managers and office administrators can use the data for invoicing and reporting, even before the team has returned from the site.

Just recently, Singletouch extended its offering to mobile, handheld data-capture devices, with the product now available in Windows environments on handhelds or on tablet PCs. The rugged Symbol mobile handhelds used for Singletouch Mobile can withstand the rigors of the job site and provide instantaneous, accurate recording of data into backend systems. Hardware is resold through Singletouch as part of the full offering.

The company anticipates it will eventually roll out its solution to the entire job site. Because electrical contracting is one of the most complex trades on a job site, with many components and considerations including labour, materials, subsistence, direct job expenses and services, extrapolating the offering to the more streamlined plumbing, HVAC and other trades involved in industrial construction is entirely possible. Singletouch is looking to partner with specialists in these fields in order to extend its capabilities to these adjacent trades.

With offices in both the U.S. and Canada, Singletouch is led by Hilsenteger and chief operating officer Scott Sheppard.



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