



Backgrounder: Technology

Singletouch has developed a comprehensive data-capture platform for electrical contractors working in industrial construction that enables real-time input of information in the field – one time, easily and accurately – thus eliminating the paperwork headaches that have plagued the industry. Details collected in the field are instantly accessible at head office and seamlessly integrated into backend systems, expediting payroll, accounting and project reporting.

Singletouch's technology consists of three components – a Windows platform called Singletouch Office, a web portal with a Citrix-based user interface called Singletouch Jobsite, and a mobile, handheld data-capture solution known as Singletouch Mobile.

The home office, the jobsite and the remote worker can all take advantage of the software tools simultaneously, with real-time data available both on-site and at the office. Customized views show only the data that is pertinent to the party accessing it, and allow manipulation of data only by an authorized user.

Anyone who needs to use the system to log transactions is called a transaction maker, and this can include a site foreman clocking labor on or off the job, a project manager calculating cost and schedule status for a project, or an accounting clerk who needs to issue invoices or reconcile purchase orders. Regardless of the task, each transaction maker has access to the data relevant to that task, and nothing else.

Singletouch is a comprehensive solution that easily integrates and shares data with traditional accounting, payroll and other reporting software, in addition to generating its own customizable reports. Once data have been entered, project managers and office administrators can use the data for invoicing and reporting, even before the team has returned from the site.

In an industry where cash flow is critical, and timely and accurate billing essential, this back-office integration eliminates paperwork bottlenecks. Accurate details are entered in the system only once, at the time and point where the transaction occurs, and delivered instantaneously to all stakeholders, eliminating the log jams and errors traditionally associated with the filing of paperwork and subsequent re-entering of details to create invoices and reports.

At any time, built-in reports provide an up-to-the-second view of project completion status, with all work and materials accurately accounted for, and actual performance against budgets and schedules easily reported to the customer.

The hierarchical dashboard of Singletouch Office displays all five critical components of electrical contracting – labour, materials, subsistence, direct job expenses and services – in their own distinct modules, with menus that drill down into detailed information about each. Some fields contain hard-set data, entered by the proper gatekeeper, and interact seamlessly with new data entered on the jobsite, while other fields are more variable and



rely on remotely entered data from the jobsite. Project controls and budgets, materials and purchase orders, inventory management, work orders and invoicing and real-time reporting are all easily managed using the system. Using Singletouch Jobsite, labor entry and purchase requisitions can be documented quickly and efficiently.

Just recently, Singletouch extended its capabilities to mobile data-capture devices resulting in the complete Singletouch platform being available in the Windows environments on handhelds or on tablet PCs. Singletouch Mobile makes purchase orders, field surveys and time and attendance monitoring accessible at the click of a button, anytime, anywhere.

The rugged Symbol mobile handhelds used for Singletouch Mobile can withstand the rigors of the jobsite and provide instantaneous, accurate recording of data into backend systems. The device supports the capture of data using a built-in barcode scanner, manual entry with a keypad, or wireless data captures from a Bluetooth keyboard. As industrial construction projects often take place in locations where communications infrastructure is unreliable, Singletouch has tested its solution using this hardware in remote locales and determined it to be both reliable and sturdy.

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