



# Crawford Construction Stays Competitive and Creates Estimates 50% Faster – by Using ProEst Estimating and Digitizer Software

## The Challenge

Mac Crawford has seen estimating technology evolve significantly since he founded Crawford Construction in 1972 and began building custom homes and doing custom remodels. Crawford recalls, “Years ago we created estimates using a calculator and a yellow tablet. You sat down, counted the parts and pieces, added them up and that was the cost for a job.”

The Lexington, KY custom builder, who has 15 employees and more than \$3M in annual sales, took advantage when the computer boom hit and soon upgraded to Excel spreadsheets, which he used successfully for several years. But Crawford was always on the look-out for a better way to create estimates.

“I heard other builders talk about faster and more accurate software programs for estimating jobs,” Crawford explains. “The industry was forcing us to become more detailed. We were doing less time and material jobs and more competitive bid work and we needed more accuracy in our estimating. We also wanted a better way to access our bid history.”

## The Solution

Crawford evaluated many estimating software solutions and narrowed his search down to Timberline and ProEst Estimating from Construction Management Software (CMS). “Timberline,” says Crawford, “is probably one of the best estimating programs available but it is also one of the most complicated, with too much of a learning curve. I actually went to one of their training sessions and walked away from it feeling like it was just too cumbersome. So we ruled it out.”

When Crawford evaluated ProEst Estimating, however, he felt he had found the ideal combination of functionality, user-friendliness and affordability.

## At-A-Glance

### Company:

Crawford Construction  
Lexington, KY  
Custom Homebuilder  
Employees: 15  
Annual revenues: over \$3M

### Challenge:

Implement a more accurate and detailed estimating system to remain competitive in the market.

### Solution:

ProEst Estimating and Digitizer Software.

### Results:

- > Accessible bid history helps produce more accurate estimates
- > Creates estimates 50% faster than estimates generated in Excel
- > Digitizer increases estimate accuracy and production speed
- > Ability to manage, produce and sell same volume of work with fewer estimators reduces overhead and increases profit
- > Delivers the ideal combination of functionality, user-friendliness and affordability

Mac says “The ProEst software is database driven, easy to use and you could make quick changes on-the-fly. Plus, the mathematics within ProEst work very similar to our old spreadsheets. In short, the program made sense to us and we understood the format.”

In January of 2003, Crawford Construction purchased ProEst Estimating software from CMS. Now, says Crawford, “I use the software daily.”

## The Results

“Since implementing ProEst,” Crawford declares, “our estimates have become much more accurate. It’s amazing to me how close our estimates are now to our actual job costs.” He attributes this to the thoroughness of the ProEst program and the ability to access bid history. “Being able to look back at the history and see what a subcontractor charged, what was estimated for a phase and what we spent creates a sense of accountability that we never had before ProEst.”

## Bottom Line

“When you are dealing with a software vendor on the phone long-distance, you don’t know who you are talking to or whether they will be there for you after the sale,” Crawford states. “CMS has been there 100 percent. They’ve answered our questions, made suggested programming changes to the software and long after the sale they are always readily available when we need something. I can’t thank them enough for that help.”

**“We create estimates about 50% faster with ProEst than we did with Excel, especially when we use the digitizer.”**

Mac Crawford, Owner  
Crawford Construction

Adding the ProEst digitizer software has further improved Crawford’s estimating speed and accuracy. “We create estimates about 50% faster with ProEst than we did with Excel, especially when we use the digitizer,” states Crawford.

The ProEst software uses a digitizer to quickly calculate areas, lengths and counts from blueprints. “The ProEst digitizer software won’t think for you,” Crawford explains. “But if your plans are accurate, it will allow you to generate estimates with an accuracy and speed that is unbelievable!”

For fiscal year 2005, Crawford Construction was down to two estimators from three the previous year. In spite of this, overall profit for the company was higher. “With the help of ProEst,” Crawford relates, “we are actually managing, producing and selling almost the same volume of work with just two estimators. Our overhead is down and our profits are up.”