

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

ProEst[®]



SPARROW SOARS INTO THE CLOUD

How ProEst standardizes the estimating process with built-in flexibility





OVERVIEW

Based in Wellington, New Zealand, family-owned Sparrow Construction has completed hundreds of technically complex building projects in its 55-year history. These projects include the civil and building works for the National Grid 'Static VAR Compensation' plant complex at Haywards, Wellington and recent involvement with the installation of a 35 km underwater fibre optic cable across Cook Strait, which separates the country's North and South Islands. With a workforce of 25 employees and a large number of subcontractors to manage, the company generates an average of 50 estimates and 10M NZD a year in annual revenue, with an emphasis on continually improving quality and productivity and consequently profitability.

BACKGROUND

Before moving to ProEst, Sparrow owner Mike Sparrow personally performed all of the company's estimating tasks, using customized spreadsheets that he developed on his own. But with an unusually varied project portfolio and a business strategy that was entirely cloud-based, Sparrow saw the need for an estimating product that could function as an integral part of an overall online platform. After exploring a number of alternatives, he chose ProEst Cloud as the company's estimating solution in 2019.

MAKING A COMMITMENT TO THE CLOUD

Although Mike Sparrow describes his construction company as small in size, it could serve as a model for a forward-thinking business with a commitment to the cloud environment. That was why ProEst, he says, was a good fit right from the start, offering instant scalability, standardized templates and prevailing logic for all his users, something that individually manipulated spreadsheets can't deliver. "I had planned all along to move the business to the cloud," said Sparrow, "and ProEst is cloud-based, which is really important. You can add staff easily using your existing infrastructure. And the database provides a set structure. Those are big pluses."



"ProEst has a lovely logic to it, which many other estimating solutions don't."

UNDERSTANDING THE PROEST PHILOSOPHY

As an engineer and committed ProEst client, what Sparrow would ideally like to see is more online teaching for the ProEst program, not just the “how to” tutorials of mechanics available now, but a deeper dive into the internal thinking that informs how ProEst was conceived and configured. “I’m a fan of ProEst,” he said. “It thinks like I do, whether that’s good or bad. I like the logic.” To that end, Sparrow says he would be interested in knowing more about the ProEst development philosophy—something he feels would add important insight into how ProEst as a tool can best be used. “The cultural context of the software is based in the USA,” he pointed out. Given its origins, he says, it would be helpful for users in any English-speaking country outside of the United States to have access to demonstrations of how ProEst is being leveraged by companies there.



“Would I strongly recommend ProEst to someone else? The answer is yes.”

STANDARDIZING THE ESTIMATING PROCESS

Instrumental to Sparrow's ProEst implementation was Melbourne-based Eric Silcott, ProEst's "boots on the ground" for clients in New Zealand and Australia. According to Silcott, Sparrow was able to immediately take advantage of the program's inherent flexibility to get polished proposals in front of clients, a quality Mike Sparrow wasn't willing to trade away for the convenience of automation. "Coming from a spreadsheet that gives a lot of flexibility in the way an estimator prices, (Mike) was able to get a similar result from ProEst, but in a collaborative cloud solution," Silcott said. "Because of the diversity of the projects that he does, he needed that versatility ProEst offers. In addition to that, ProEst gives the ability to standardize the use of productivity norms, base factors and other elements that don't allow for formulas to break, like a spreadsheet often does—and to standardize the methodology of estimating within the business." Mike Sparrow concurs: "You can use it as a spreadsheet, with the kind flexibility that most of the other packages just don't have."



ABOUT PROEST

ProEst provides advanced construction estimating capabilities for leading companies and public sector clients in the United States, Canada and Australia. Our cloud-based platform combines cost estimating, digital takeoffs and bid day analysis in a single powerful solution—a proven way to reduce costs, ensure accuracy and streamline pre-construction workflow.