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Industry Specific Software, Inc. — ISS Construction Manager

800-877-2496 www.iss-software.com

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*From the April/May 2006 Review of
Construction Accounting Software*

ISS Construction Manager – Version 6 from Industry Specific Software, Inc. (ISS) is designed for small to midsize construction companies. Add-on modules also make ISS an attractive product for service and warranty management.

Liz Rigney of Forefront Construction, a builder in southwest Florida that currently builds 200 homes per year, has found the most beneficial aspect of ISS to be the job management module. “You can track each job to the penny based on budgets, sub-quotes or customer allowances,” she says. “The managers love getting reports that they can understand without having to know a lot about accounting. At a glance, they can see where the job is and what is over budget.” Rigney also points out that the program is very user friendly. “With a little bit of computer knowledge, you can learn to do anything with it,” she notes. “We use it to track almost everything in our business.” Rigney recommends that new users get the Platinum support package because it includes the complete support line. “It’s a great feature,” she says, “and you can learn about the features of the program from miles away.”

LEARNING CURVE — 4 Stars

Installation is completed in stages. It may be handy to print the installation instructions that are included on the CD. You will need to first install database components, launch the installer, install the product, install SQL databases, and then attach the database to the server. ISS also gives you the option to have its support people install the program remotely. The ISS Quick Start Wizard guides you through company setup and lets you choose the chart of accounts, whether to use discount calculations, and lets you choose posting accounts, as well. Multiple divisions can be set up in ISS, along with individual job identifiers to track expenses for each job. The main screen of ISS has a drop-down menu bar at the top. Modules are found by clicking on the Functions option. You can also access the contact management, document management and calendar functions from the menu bar. Clicking on Menu reveals a module menu that expands to display features found within each module.

ISS runs on the Microsoft Data Engine (MSDE), which is designed for up to five users, but can also be run on SQL Server without any program modifications. Various customization functions are built into ISS, including the ability to set system defaults and system colors, and modify journal entries. This function should be password protected to safeguard against abuse and to protect your audit trail.

MODULES & FUNCTIONALITY — 4.5 Stars

The basic system of ISS includes GL, AP, AR, Subcontractor Management, Job Management and Banking modules. Add-on modules include Contact Management, Document Management, Inventory Management, Payroll, Purchasing, Scheduling, Time and Materials Billing, and Warranty Management. New features in Version 6 include an upgraded database engine (Microsoft Access to MSDE), the ability handle payroll direct deposit, the ability to apply cash to an account in advance of an invoice, and a new contact management module that tracks leads from prospect to post-sales follow-up. You can also now track system usage using the system logging function, which maintains a log of all user activity.

When entering a new job file, you can enter the default markup percentage; the projected starting and ending dates; any certification or warranty expiration dates; the client, if applicable; the location of the new job; who is responsible for financing; and any notes you want to attach to the job file. You can also

enter square footage, any HVAC information and phase numbers. Your job phase numbers can contain up to six numerical digits. Subcontractor quotes can be tracked in ISS, and the system will warn you when payment exceeds the quote entered. ISS will also produce AIA draw requests and general contractor affidavits. Job budgets are easily maintained, and all over-budgeting expenses will be highlighted

in red. Using ISS, you can also reactivate a closed job and bill clients on a time and materials basis. The optional Payroll module handles direct deposit, multiple pay accounts, and multi-state payroll and tax details.

IMPORT/EXPORT/INTEGRATION — 4 Stars

All modules, including add-ons, are designed to seamlessly integrate. On the vendor's web site, ISS provides a list of partner programs that will integrate with ISS, which includes Easy Est estimating software, EZ Homebuilder, Cadsoft Design software, and National Payment. As well, the Web Link Management module lets you manage vendor, customer and job-related web links.

SUPPORT & TRAINING — 4.5 Stars

New users of ISS receive free installation, free implementation planning, 60 days of free telephone support, and one day of one-on-one training at ISS or via the Internet at your place of business.

ISS offers the Platinum Service Plan, which provides you with two certified analysts to resolve any questions you may have. You will also receive discounts on new products, upgrades and all training services. Your discount will increase according to how many years you have subscribed to the Platinum Plan. Internet support is also available, and you will have access to updates and enhancements, as well as the option to set up a training or service appointment during or after hours.

REPORTING — 4 Stars

Numerous standard reports are included. Reports are accessed from the menu bar and are listed by module. Clicking on one of the tabbed modules brings up a display of available reports. ISS uses Crystal Decisions to format its reports so reports are easily customized. You can easily change reporting formats and report line types so you can have your sub-totals where you want them.

RELATIVE VALUE — 4.5 Stars

ISS Construction Software ranges in price from \$2,700 for a single-user to \$9,650 for five users. You should expect to invest a little bit of time to get the

system up and running properly. With its basic system, add-on modules and integration

with a variety of construction industry third-party programs, ISS definitely deserves a second look.

2006 Overall Rating — 4.5 Stars

Article

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