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From the April/May 2006 [Review of Construction Accounting Software](#)

Toolbox Construction Management Software is aimed at midsize construction, contracting and other construction-related businesses. Originally developed by a construction-specific CPA firm, Toolbox continues to provide regular software updates to a comprehensive product.

Janet Johanson of Tooz Construction, Inc. in Dickinson, North Dakota, says the driving forces behind their selection of Toolbox were cost, support and the ability to convert to Toolbox in one day. She noted, "We worked really hard, but we did accomplish converting very quickly, as it was the end of the quarter, end of the month, end of the week, etc." Ms. Johanson says the most beneficial aspect of the program is that it's user friendly and forgiving. "There is no mistake you can make that can't be easily corrected," she says.

LEARNING CURVE — 4.5 Stars

Installation of Toolbox was easy. Several steps are involved, but detailed installation instructions provide assistance. Toolbox is ODBC compliant and offers several customization features including the ability to customize transaction entry screens for AP Invoices, POs, Subcontracts, Inventory Transactions, Manual Disbursements, Manual Receipts, Equipment Transactions, Doc Control transactions, Quotes, AR Invoices and Payroll Timecard Entry. Unneeded features can also be turned off.

The main screen of Toolbox contains a drop-down menu with access to all installed system modules. To the left of the screen is a vertical bar that contains a list of icons offering one-click access to frequently used functions. Data-entry

screens follow a logical pattern, and data-entry screens contain lookup options

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of buttons that will take you to previously entered transactions; let you attach notes, scanned copies of source documents, spreadsheets, documents or other relevant information; access the Help option; or enter a new transaction. The Utilities feature lets you set preferences, customize your transaction screens and search for transactions. The icons to the left of the screen provide access to various data lists, AP, PO and AR invoice entry.

MODULES & FUNCTIONALITY — 4.5 Stars

Toolbox is an all-inclusive system, which means new users will receive the entire suite of products. Areas of the system include GL, Job Cost, AR, AP, Payroll, Inventory, Fixed Assets, Plant, Estimating, Doc Control and Scheduling. This latest version of Toolbox features several enhancements including expanded data import functionality and additional drill-down capability in the Job Cost module, the ability to maintain unlimited cost rates for both inventory and non-inventory items, upgraded financial reporting, and a new utility to aid with importing data and converting invoices. Using the new .NET grid, you can customize existing report columns or add user-defined columns. You can also define column width and arrange columns using the drag-and-drop functionality.

The Job List function is where you can add a new job by clicking on add and entering the job number and description. The job entry screen is comprehensive, with tabs for entering job description, scales, job budget, scheduled value, cost plus, status, purchase order and subcontractor information, liens, an area to attach files, and notes. Toolbox offers unlimited levels for cost codes and job phase codes. A bid item level allows users to automatically generate POs and Subcontracts. Item lists can be looked up from the bid item level and provide users with assemblies, inventory locations, and unlimited material costs and billing rate scales. Job budgets, bid items, and schedule of values can easily be copied between jobs to facilitate the setup of similar jobs.

The plant module offers unlimited material cost and billing rate scales. You

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so you can easily export data to third-party applications such as Microsoft Word and Excel. Toolbox has also added new system utilities for importing customer, vendor, employee, job, journal entries and vendor information from other applications.

SUPPORT & TRAINING — 4 Stars

Toolbox offers various training options including a Toolbox certification process, Toolbox Transactions, an Implementation class, and various other Internet-based classes. Product support is available from the Toolbox website, via e-mail or by using a toll-free number. Ms. Johanson has had good experience with the support team: "They are so patient with us, and, trust me, ... we've put them through the test."

REPORTING — 4.5 Stars

Numerous reports are provided, all using Crystal Reports' data engine. Each module also contains the Custom Reports and Forms option, where you can create your own reports. Reporting has drill-down as well as on-demand sub-reporting capabilities. ODBC compliance also means that you can easily e-mail or export information directly to third-party spreadsheet programs, word processors and other formats for even more reporting capability.

RELATIVE VALUE — 4.5 Stars

Toolbox is an easily navigated program that even new users will quickly feel comfortable using. Pricing for Toolbox starts at \$6,100 for a single-user system (additional users are \$1,700 each for up to five users). Pricing per module goes down after five users to \$850 for a sixth user, etc. Toolbox Lite is also available starting at \$1,000. Toolbox is an excellent choice for midsize construction

and other industry- related businesses that desire a program with flexibility,

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