“Most contractors can take off a simple, small job, and there won’t be much variation among their respective prices; but when you get to a large, complex project, that’s where we excel, especially in the accuracy of the takeoff and our installation method,” says Brian McGlone, the man whose company, B. J. McGlone & Co., Inc., bears his name. “Unlike many of our counterparts, we found we could compete favorably on the larger, more complicated jobs.”

Brian McGlone, 41, has been thinking big for a long time; he founded his company in 1983, when he was only 27. At age 14 he was working during summer vacations, for his father, Thomas J. McGlone, a leader in the construction industry. At age 18 he was working in the field. He continued to work while attending college, working full time during the day and studying at night during his last two years at Rutgers University, where he received his bachelor’s degree in accounting and economics. He continued working full time in various positions, including estimating, production and accounting, while earning his master’s in business administration from Monmouth College. Not surpris-
ingly, McGlone acknowledges himself to be a workaholic, putting in a 60-hour-plus week, though he does admit to taking time off for his wife of 17 years, Margaret; their three children, Megan, 11, Brian, 8, and Michael, 4; and his favorite hobby, golf.

McGlone, a long-time member of The Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries—International, also finds time to be actively involved in the association and is currently on its board of directors. What McGlone likes most about the association, he says, is “the educational and technical information provided, along with the opportunity to interact with my colleagues across the country.”

Wise Use of Downtime

The Edison, N.J.-based company did $2 million its first year and added roughly that much per year until his market went into a sharp decline from 1988 to 1991. Since then revenues have climbed back up to an annual $12 million. McGlone has always had the estimating focus that allowed him to take on the big jobs, but because of the computerization installed during that downtime, which took about two years to implement, the company’s estimating capacity has doubled.

“Because we weren’t that busy and had some extra time on our hands, we decided to look to the future by implementing an extensive computerization and database development program,” McGlone says. “I think we’re one of the few companies in the industry that has completely computerized the estimating function. It was a top-down commitment from management. We wanted to make it happen.”

McGlone believes his company’s Timberline computer system, with its integrated modules, has given his company a competitive edge. Currently they are using the third revision of a database that was developed in-house in 1990. In all, there are approximately 3,000 items in the database, each of which...
contains about 30 fields for a total of some 90,000 pieces of information.

For instance, take an item such as a steel stud. Some of the pieces of information include a description, takeoff unit, waste factor, crew type (for example, plasterer, carpenter, laborer or a combination thereof), order unit, price, taxable status, material class (for example, framing), price update code and job cost code. Gauge, size and length also are included.

Created out of the individual items in the database are various combinations that result in work packages or assemblies. For instance, if there are 10 different partition types on a job, they are each taken off as a predeveloped work package. The estimator answers a series of questions concerning each partition. Questions would include stud length, size and spacing; gypsum size, height and number of layers, as well as sundry questions, such as insulation and corner bead requirements. “The computer uses your responses to calculate a total partition cost, as well as a cost per linear foot,” McGlone says.

### Reporting Is Key

The reporting function is key to the software. Much valuable information can be drawn from the wealth of reports the system provides. For instance, the computer automatically generates the bill of materials list for the purchasing of required products, and the prices are included as well.

But McGlone takes the process a step further with value engineering. “We estimate the job per plans and specifications, then value engineer the project and make recommendations regarding product substitutions, installation methods and schedule improvements that result in savings to our clients without any diminution of quality,” he says. Most of his jobs are competitively bid, but while offering the bid price he then offers substitute products that can do the same job at a lower price. “For example, we might suggest changing a 14-gauge stud to an 16-gauge stud and...”
The $35 million renovation of Johnson & Johnson gave McGlone a $3 million contract for work on light-gauge walls and ceilings, along with drywall, carpentry, acoustical ceilings and millwork.

then reinforcing it with cold-rolled channel,” he explains. “The computer allows us to make these substitutions easily.” At the same time McGlone is bringing these product alternatives to the general contractors, construction managers, architects and designers, he also is offering more efficient installation methods.

“I’m not sure to what extent others are doing this, but we’re simply offering more expedient alternatives with no reduction in quality,” McGlone says. “This allows us to take initiative, be creative and pass on the savings to both the general contractor and, ultimately, the owner.”

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The Johnson & Johnson renovation job in Skillman, N.J., included work on two interior courtyards, and a 300-foot-long center atrium with a curved ceiling and fascias. The 500,000-square-foot diaper factory storage facility was renovated into a high-level lab and office complex.

The computer also provides field reports, which, McGlone says, “show productivity and item quantities that field personnel can easily refer to.” Again, everything is generated from the estimate itself. The report details job costing and total labor hours, as well as breaking down each job by a user-defined location. “If it’s a lo-story building, each floor represents a location, and we know how many hours it will take to perform work on each floor,” McGlone says.

Still another report that comes out of the basic estimating data is the job analysis. This is a breakdown of a project for management purposes in which every location is analyzed in terms of actual labor, material, equipment and subcontractors categories.

From his 60,000-square-foot facility, McGlone directs a warehouse and office staff of 18, including five estimators, and a total field crew of 100 to 120. For the interior, he offers drywall, acoustical ceilings and both rough and finish carpentry. For the exterior he provides light gauge steel framing systems, along with exposed aggregates, exterior insulation and finish systems.
and stucco finishes. Another specialty is both interior and exterior spray fireproofing with both cementitious and non-cementitious applications.

The Big Jobs

Throughout the Eastern seaboard, McGlone focuses on larger projects, such as industrial facilities, corporate headquarters, convention centers, airports, hotels and mall anchor stores. The company has become a leader in the area of hospitals, continuing care, laboratories and other health-care facilities. Here's a brief overview of three of McGlone's jobs, all of which were large, complicated and had to be completed quickly.

The Lord & Taylor retail establishment in the Garden State Plaza, Paramus, N.J., had a contract value of $1.6 million and an overall project cost of $10 million. The store broke ground in

From his 60,000-square-foot facility, Brian McGlone directs a warehouse and office staff of 18, including five estimators, and a total field crew of 100 to 120.
August 1995. McGlone began work in October 1995, and the store will open in August 1996. This is a 140,000-square-foot fast-track department store built in conjunction with the 100-store mall expansion. Peak manpower was 45 workers of various trades.

We’ll estimate the job per plans and specifications, then value engineer the project and make recommendations regarding product substitutions, installation methods and schedule improvements that result in savings to our clients without any diminution of quality.

—Brian McGlone

The work performed by McGlone
included 65,000 square feet of exterior light gauge packaged with finishes, spray-on fireproofing, interior dry-wall/carpentry and acoustical ceilings. The exterior was completed in 10 weeks, enabling the job to be heated through the winter months. The interior was highlighted by extensive use of GFRG at light coves and cornices. The 68,000 square feet of wallboard ceilings with 3,000 light fixtures made this job a real challenge. Sixty-five percent of the work was related to ceilings, fascias and coves.

A second recent project of McGlone’s was the $150 million Daily News building in Jersey City, N.J. This 420,000-square-foot printing facility houses nine presses. Demolition of the old Clorox Bleach factory began in July 1994. McGlone arrived on the scene in March 1995, and the project was completed in August of that year. McGlone’s contract of $1.4 million included exterior light-gauge framing, spray-on fireproofing, interior dry-wall/carpentry and acoustical ceiling.

“Our work started with light-gauge framing of roof parapets with extensive roof blocking requirements,” McGlone says. “Twenty-five percent of the interior work was office related with the balance of the work consisting of one-, two- and three-hour separation walls with high deck heights. We made heavy use of shaftwall systems to achieve ratings.”

Lastly, the $35 million conversion of a 500,000-square-foot diaper factory storage facility owned by Johnson & Johnson to a high-level lab and office complex was started in April 1995. McGlone’s $3 million contract required completion in about five months for the July 1996 opening. This project, in Skillman, N.J., includes two new interior courtyards, cafeteria and kitchen facilities, basketball court and grand style 300-foot-long center atrium with a curved ceiling and fascias. McGlone’s job includes 34-foot and 24-foot high light-gauge walls supporting interstitial light-gauge ceilings, along with drywall, carpentry, acoustical ceilings and millwork.

About the Author
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