

## **USGN interview with Laurie Collins, COO of Menemsha Solutions.**

Q. Tell the readers about Menemsha Solutions:

A. We are a national survey, architectural, general construction and management company. We offer Surveys (Laser2CAD as-built/360-degree photography), a full array of architectural services, construction, and management solutions—turnkey or á la carte depending on our clients' needs. We are a solution provider for our client's national store development plan, inclusive of: New Stores (ground-up). Remodels, TI's, High Volume Remodel Program Roll-outs, Fast-Paced Expansions, Laser2CAD As-Built Surveys, Data Collection, ADA Assessments/Remediation, etc.

Q. How long have you relied on the USGN platform and how do you use it?

A. We have been using it for 12 -15 years. Initially we started utilizing USGN as a tool to manage a 2000+ national remodel program for one of our big box clients. Then we kept finding other areas within our business where we could leverage the system. With all the possibilities realized, we established a team of key users that worked to start building a 'new' Menemsha USGN site. Our goal was to improve our business processes and gain efficiencies using USGN. To ensure a successful rollout of the system, the same team of key users (4 individuals) executed the change management plan - ensuring everyone was using it correctly and as instructed and the provided continued support to ensure compliance and acceptance. After 6 months, it became Business as Usual. Later, Accounting, Business Development, Estimating, and Bid Solicitation were added to the system.

Many of our clients utilize our system, thus we are constantly customizing it for their program(s) and/or project needs. We custom build menus, forms, and reports to meet their unique requirements. We are constantly adding things to the platform.

Currently, we have 5000 Active projects loaded on the system and over 12,000+ archived projects.

Every department within Menemsha utilizes the platform; Sales, Estimating, Accounting, Architecture, Construction, etc. We run our sales pipeline, invitations to bid, scheduling, invoicing, submittals, job-cost approvals, construction documentation, change orders (subs and customers), lien waivers, all thru USGN. It is essential to EVERYTHING we do.

Q. What are your favorite/ 'go-to' features and why?

A. I like the Dashboards – managing by exception or items pending completion. I can look at each Project Manager (PM) in any division to see if anything is needed, I can identify what is pending approvals or an action and how long it has been open. I can clearly identify workload balance - we have over 20 + project managers across the divisions running any number of projects at one time thru various stages.

We just started using the grid editor and that has been a big help. The automated workflow is great— invoices come in thru the system are routed to accounting, verified then pushed to the PM and when approved it returns to accounting for entry to AP and payment. No paper. Completely automated.

Q. What will you do next with USGN's platform?

A. Grid Editor, Homepage upgrades unique to user / user group. Create a homepage view that includes more applicable information by division or department. Currently all our users default to the Corporate Portal view. We have customized the client home page view we want to do same for our internal divisions / departments.

Also, E-Signature for people in the field. That will be another process improvement that we just heard about at the latest user conference that we want to investigate more.

Q. Who does the in-house development work – programmers?

A. Not at all. Our key user's team / system administrators perform most of the in-house development. None have 'programmer' training.

Q. How long did it take to become proficient? It wasn't too hard to learn once we understood the platform?

A. Initially, we used the code that Justin or Mike created – saw what they did and then reused/modified elsewhere. We learned through trial and error initially but just picked it up. We can build reports and forms and the dashboards. We change things all the time, so we can change it as needed and when needed.

Q. When do you call on USGN to develop?

A. When we need something pretty (our reports are functional but not fancy). We call USGN for something that requires more programming knowledge. If it takes them less time, then we send it off to them to do it.

Q. How would your work life be different if you didn't have the USGN platform?

A. There are other systems out there but they are not as customizable and we need that. I can't imagine our business without USGN.