

* DESIGN/BUILDERS ARE MOLDING THE NEXT ARCHITECTS.

NORTH • AMERICAN *Builders*

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RESERVED FOR LUXURY

*Naples Reserve features Florida's
distinct southern coastal
architecture in a lakefront setting.*

ISTAR / PG. 18

IStar has put together a team of select builders
to create approximately 1,154 lakefront homes in 11 distinct
neighborhoods for its Naples Reserve development.

ON-SITE WITH

168 **Chris Jones, Descartes**

As head of professional services at Descartes, Jones is at the forefront of helping customers in the building supply space implement technology that helps them run more efficiently while better serving customers.



on-site with

July_August Issue

CHRIS JONES

2016

With experience helping companies in residential and commercial building supply use technology to keep contractor customers working, Chris Jones has an interesting vantage point on the value of operating a tighter supply chain—especially in the summer when the construction industry is running full throttle. As head of professional services at Descartes, Jones is at the forefront of helping customers in the building supply space implement technology that helps them run more efficiently while better serving customers. Jones took time to speak with *North American Builders* magazine about the construction industry's drive to a paperless existence.

What is driving the construction industry's demand to remove paper from its supply chain?

Paper can't keep pace anymore with an industry that today is highly variable and highly mobile. It's a drag on speed, an obstacle to accuracy, an encumbrance on efficiency and an impediment to achieving higher standards of customer service. It exacts a toll on suppliers and contractors that many may not be aware of—on day-to-day operations and on the bottom line.

Why are some companies hesitant to take the leap to paperless?

As with any leap, change management is a legitimate challenge and technology-based leaps are no exception. People can be hesitant to replacing long-standing practices with a "new way" of doing things, and resistant to the learning curve associated with technology. Companies may also just not know exactly where to begin as their "technology" expertise lies in the field of construction as opposed to IT. Cost is also an obvious factor; however, with the most advanced route planning and mobile solutions available in proven cloud-based deployment models, cost is really not a barrier to entry even for medium- to small-sized organizations.

How does real-time delivery route planning help contractors, and how is this best implemented?

Real-time route planning helps contractors by driving up the delivery performance of their suppliers. Depending on a company's requirements, a routing system can be implemented as a web-based solution to minimize in-house IT man-

agement and upfront capital, and can also be installed on premise in a traditional desktop environment.

What type of variables can be accounted for in dynamic appointment scheduling, and what sort of hindrances are avoided with this methodology?

Appointment scheduling is driven by many things a supplier cannot account or plan for, such as changing contractor demands, crew/resource availability, weather, inventory requirements and more. Any one of these can help or hinder productivity and profitability for both contractors and suppliers. With dynamic appointment scheduling, suppliers not only have a level of visibility into the impact of unforeseen changes where little previously existed, but they also have the tools to exert more real-time control over these types of variables by making on the fly adjustments and communicating the details in real-time to all participants and stakeholders.

How do real-time delivery updates on mobile devices keep construction schedules on track?

Contractors need to know exactly when material is arriving at various work sites to efficiently manage crews. Leading companies are using mobile technology to provide contractors with accurate and extensive real-time visibility into the details and timing of construction site

deliveries, including providing automated exception notifications. Drivers access their delivery schedules using a mobile device. Real-time GPS information is received every few minutes to estimate travel time, monitor delivery appointments and keep contractors up to date. In turn, contractors using mobile devices are notified automatically when delivery schedules change.

What other areas of the construction process could best benefit from mobile technology?

One particular area of focus for mobile is proof of delivery. Paper-based proof of delivery is fraught with illegible details, signatures, lost paperwork and time-consuming disputes between supplier and contractor. With mobile devices, drivers have everything they need to wirelessly confirm deliveries and other details in real time — including electronic proof of delivery. Usually a signature is captured to signify the safe arrival of materials at the construction site, and digital pictures verify that the right materials, in the right quantities, were delivered undamaged.

What does the future hold for mobile technology in the construction industry?

The power of mobile technology in the construction industry, like many distribution-intensive industries, lies in its potential to help companies use the supply chain as a competitive weapon. Mobile technology also answers the call for information to be delivered in real time but, in order to do so, the information itself has to be created in real time.  

