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## The future is here: Are you ready?

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The window of improved business conditions has opened, and it's now time to make hay while the sun is shining. As business grows, we're all getting busier and busier. Do you sometimes feel like you're trying to drink water out of a fire hose? How can we grow our business in a cost-efficient manner without "killing" ourselves? Here's how technology can help.

### Job Acquisition Stage

There are "on-line" services that have all kinds of project information (planning, bidding, plan holders, bid results, etc.) available at a click of a mouse. Public works projects will eventually be bid, and plans will be "pulled" over the Internet. With professional training, the estimating process can be streamlined to turn out fast and accurate bids. Faxpackages such as "Bidfax" or "Winfax" can vastly streamline

requests for sub-bids.

### Project Management

An organized job should result in a satisfied owner (repeat business) as well as fewer headaches and greater returns for you, the contractor. Programs such as "Prolog" and "Microsoft Project" assist with contract management and scheduling. "MS Project" will plot out an entire job on a time line, with complete integration of subs and materials. This allows for effective resource allocation (labor, equipment, materials and subs) as well as "what if" planning.

Digital cameras can "download" pictures instantly to job-site laptops which can instantly be "e-mailed" anywhere (main office, bank, bonding company, owner, etc.) Job-site remote laptops also allow for immediate access to detailed cost reports (budget vs. actual) on each job in process. You can access this form anywhere!

### Office/Administrative

There are several accounting and database management systems available, which can streamline, simplify and organize any office.

Computer systems are getting faster, less expensive and easier to use. Technology will allow you to "offload" some tasks without adding additional employees. Basically, you can "do more for less."

Technology certainly is not the "end-all" for everybody, but, the way we do business is changing rapidly, and those who embrace change will benefit the most.

If a computer can do it, your competitors are using it to beat you. Think of your business as a game of pool...it's wise to plan a shot or two ahead.

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