

SupplyPro and BuildPro: Internet Tracking Systems

If you knew that one of your biggest builder customers had to change his schedule today, and that his crews need their materials on-site a week earlier than you planned, what would you do?

Hyphen Solutions, a technology company based in Addison, Texas, is committed to using the Internet to build better connections between homebuilders and their suppliers. (The company's senior executives have more than 60 years combined working in the homebuilding and construction industries, giving them a strong sense for what builders need.)

The company has developed two Internet-based products, BuildPro and SupplyPro, designed to provide homebuilding professionals with easy, reliable, daily access to their information. Both BuildPro and SupplyPro allow real-time, two-way scheduling collaboration between builders and their suppliers.

With BuildPro, a builder can enter a start date and end date on a project to create a cycle time, and the system then includes all lead times on labor and materials and duration times for the work to be performed. The BuildPro system calendar can help schedule

SupplyPro serves LBM dealers who want to track builder needs in real time. BuildPro helps builders track and monitor all jobs.

start dates, phase durations, subcontractors, supplies required, and budget parameters. The system will also provide activity lists for daily, weekly, or monthly review.

Builders can also update or revise their building schedules via BuildPro's computer or handheld interface, instantly transmitting those changes to suppliers, and then can receive confirmation or feedback from suppliers via SupplyPro. This eliminates constant paperwork or phone calls to keep both the supplier and builder in contact with each other.

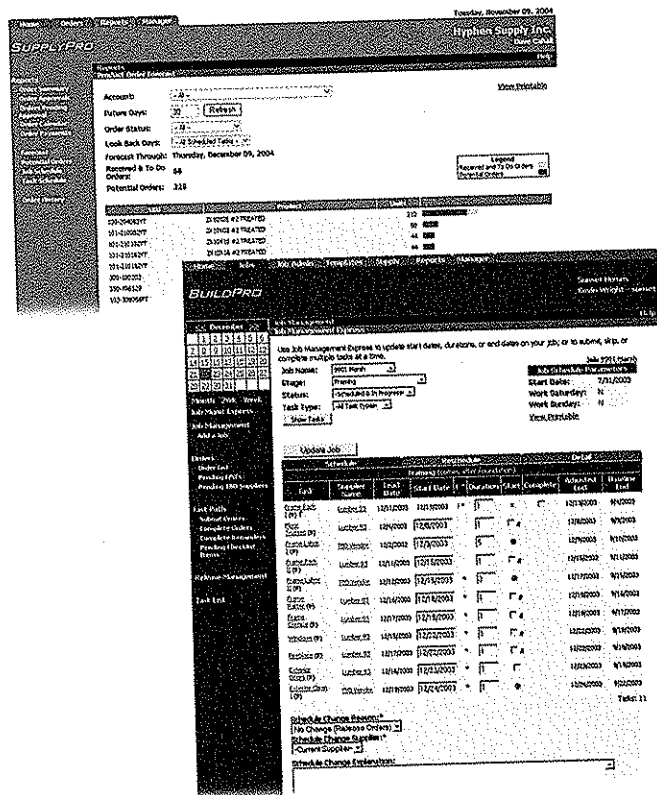
For instance, using SupplyPro, a dealer can view a constantly updated forecast report that shows both received and projected orders for lumber, sacked concrete, or other materials. A calendar view shows various work schedules anticipated for a number of builder clients. SupplyPro's Internet-based system also allows dealers to view a builder's schedule in real time. Dealers receive quick notification of any changes.

From a dealer's standpoint, the products replace many manual processes, such as using grease boards, fax machines, and paperwork to track builder needs—which improves scheduling of crews, vehicles, and material delivery. Dealers can track and plan what work and materials will be needed up to six months out in real-time.

The company has recently enhanced its two signature products with SupplyPro Connect, which expands BuildPro and SupplyPro into what the company says is the industry's first integrated supply chain solution for managing all tasks and orders associated with the building of a home. Hyphen Solutions and GE Consumer & Industrial entered a strategic alliance to create SupplyPro Connect to streamline the order process for GE appliances within the home building industry. Other suppliers and dealers can also use the system for their own products.

By automating the ordering process, a supplier and its builder customers establish a more standard approach that ultimately reduces errors and the risk associated with ordering the wrong product. SupplyPro Connect takes critical information found in SupplyPro transactions such as purchase orders and change orders and makes this data available for electronic input into back office systems (order processing, accounting, inventory management, and so on.) No manual order entry is needed. The company says by automating the order-to-delivery process, dealers can realize reduced overhead, improved delivery, fewer errors, reduced order reconciliation, increased accuracy, and improved communications.

The company says its products integrate seamlessly and securely with most back-office accounting systems and ERPs, including PeopleSoft, FAST and more. ■



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