

## Throwing Good Money After Bad

Most companies have probably made software buying mistakes and we made ours last year. We spent \$20,000 for an accounting system and another \$20,000 being trained on it. As we continued to have problems with it throughout the year, our CPA firm, who recommended the software, admonished us that we had not spent enough money on training and proposed we take more training and of course, increase their "consulting" time in our office. We responded by replacing both the software and our CPA firm this year figuring this software was going to keep costing us in mistakes and training year after year.

In the first two months of this year our accounting is going great and we anticipate we will spend less than \$25,000 this year down from \$100,000 last year.

We, of course, talk to many companies who have made software purchasing mistakes. Typically a company won't rectify an error for several years because they don't want anyone to know they made a mistake. Sometimes we get quite a surprise. We recently acquired a customer who spent \$30,000 with another vendor and switched to ours just 4 months later without getting a refund. This takes guts and our hats are off to this company.

More common are complaints year-after-year about their vendor or software but a reluctance to do anything about it. Some common complaints are that the vendor's support department does not return calls for days or tries to make them feel guilty or stupid for calling.

Software is supposed to make life easier and increase productivity. If that is not happening, you need to estimate the cost of maintaining the status quo versus doing something about it.

HCSS is making an unprecedented offer in this newsletter to companies who have purchased competitor products over the past few years and we'd appreciate it if you tell your associates about it.

Typically, HCSS does not discount software because our philosophy is that different people should not pay different amounts for exactly the same thing. However, we are offering this particular discount because we know that companies that have wasted their money in the past have political and trust objections to overcome. We also recognize that a few companies did not choose to wait for our Windows Product that was not completed on schedule.

## ESOP Fables Are Really True

### Employees receive 25% ownership of HCSS

Now when you call HCSS, you are talking with an owner. In December, we launched our Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), which places a significant amount of company stock in each employee's Individual Retirement Account.

We are confident that you, our customer, will benefit from this. Each of us now thinks of his or her work as a business, not a job. That will help us better relate to you as we deliver products and ser-

vices to make your business more profitable. And, now more than ever, it is in each and every owner's best interest to keep our customers happy, satisfied, and generally in the pink.

Creating an ESOP is not trivial. This long-winded section of tax law encourages owners to sell their company's stock to employees rather than to outsiders. In essence, Mike gives up a portion of his stock and places it in an ESOP Trust. We steer a portion of our pre-tax pay toward

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## Competitive Upgrade

*For people who have purchased competitor's products and are upset with the poor performance, poor support, "Windows" that does not look like other Windows Products, expiring keys that they weren't aware of, etc. HCSS is making this special offer to anyone who wants to become an HCSS customer:*

*\* For anyone who purchased a competitor product between January 1, 1997 and March 1, 1999, HCSS will issue a credit of that purchase price toward the purchase of any HCSS products, up to 50% off.*

**or:**

*\* For anyone who bought a competitor product between January 1, 1994 and December 31, 1996, HCSS will issue a credit up to 25% off HCSS products.*

*Anyone recently buying a competitor's product and then buying 3 of ours, is in effect, getting their money back.*

*This offer is good until September 1, 1999 and thus allows plenty of time to estimate the cost/benefit of changing.*

## MHD Approves HeavyBid Bid Proposal Forms

In February of this year, the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) declared that the bid proposal form produced by *HeavyBid for Windows* meets the format as established by MHD and will be accepted as part of a bid submitted by a Bidder. At this time, HCSS is one of the only two software companies that have received approval to submit a computer generated bidform.

## HeavyJob/Foreman Gets a Big Brother : HeavyJob/Manager

Job	Name	Total \$ Expected	Total \$ To-Date	Variance %	% Complete
98-021	SR266 Bypass at Monaville	486,367.71	473,466.44	2.65	101.07
98-022	University Drive Extension	249,939.71	242,835.09	2.84	47.15
99-054	FM 529 Paving Project	32,265.79	29,036.24	10.00	6.70

  

Cost Code	Description	Unit	Prod Qty. To-Date	Total \$ To-Date	Total \$ Expected
1113	Clear & Grub - Medium	ACRE	10.00	12450.03	15869.04
1150	Concrete Demolition	CY	965.00	12999.25	14427.14
1941	Straw/Hay/Mulch (Acre)	ACRE	12.50	1323.00	3468.62
2100	Bulk Excavation	CY	94265.00	74680.04	85134.01
2620	Place & Compact Borrow	CY	21800.00	46044.11	37988.82
2621	Compact Bulk Fill	CY	94265.00	60694.84	47674.04

  

	Man Hours	Eqp. Hours	Labor Cost	Eqp. Cost	Mat'l Cost	Expense Cost	Sub Cost	Total Cost
Expected	400.00	300.00	9,658.88	6,210.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	15,869.04
Actual	317.00	240.00	8,169.63	4,280.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,450.03
Variance %	20.75	20.00	15.42	31.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	21.55

**H**heavyJob/Manager is the second product in our job control software line. This multi-user system is geared toward your office personnel, and offers consolidated analysis of all your company's jobs and resources. Timecard, Material, and Daily Diary data can be directly entered by your office personnel or easily imported from our field version, HeavyJob / Foreman.

A consolidated analysis screen is shown above. All your jobs are listed at the top, along with their up-to-the-minute estimated costs and comparisons to budget. When you highlight a specific job, detail of that job is presented in the bottom tabs. The detail can then be inspected from three different approaches. This example looks at the job's cost code summary. Highlighting a specific cost

code loads the bottom boxes with up-to-the-minute summations of resources on that cost code. Again, your performance is compared to the budget. Finally, if you discover a cost code that is running over, you can quickly open the particular job to look for the cause of that problem.

With the "Custom Tab", you have full control over what kind of information is presented. These tabs are found throughout *HeavyJob/Manager*, and they let YOU select what fields are presented in the tables. *HeavyJob* is committed to helping you discover problems while they are still small. One way of accomplishing this is to give you the power to see your data the way you need to see it.

*HeavyJob/Manager* will export your information to an ever growing list of accounting systems. We are currently looking for customers to test our "hand over" into Bidtek, Dexter + Chaney, Computer Guidance, Cheetah Advanced Technologies, and Foundation accounting systems.

## ESOP Fables cont'd.

(continued from page 1)

the Trust, which then pays Mike back for the original stock. Mike gets favorable tax treatment on the stock sale, and we get a beefy 401k-type of retirement plan.

The ESOP program will enhance continuity and quality at HCSS. While we have very little turnover now, the seven-year vesting period will further encourage employees to stay with the company. We are proud of our customer relationships, and recognize that efficient, high quality interactions take time to develop. When you get to know one of us, you have a problem-solver for life at HCSS. But if a vested employee *does* leave, his distribution is spread out over the next five years, and is based upon the success of HCSS during those *future* years. So on the one hand, the ESOP encourages us to stay, but if we do leave, it encourages us to leave our posts in good working order.

For those of you that know Mike, this development should come as no surprise. He strongly believes in empowerment. He wants to *empower* his customers with the information required to make correct business decisions. He has *empowered* his employees with the knowledge, hardware, and responsibility so that we can each contribute to our company's success. To make us part owners is just the next step in building a vibrant, responsive, and long-lived company. It is a blast to work here: that's why we don't leave.

Nevertheless, HCSS is still very much Mike's ship. Despite the generosity of the original seed stock, Mike will remain the majority shareholder for the foreseeable future. It is his and Sophie's vision that has built this company, and they will continue to ride herd while we grow. And we will grow. Just watch.

## In-House Training Offered Monthly

As many of our customers have discovered, *HeavyBid* training is booked for the next few months and we have a waiting list. To alleviate the wait for some of these companies, we are offering an alternate solution.

Beginning in March, we are conducting a 2-day entry level classroom style training session at our offices in Houston. The cost is \$400 per person which includes lunch. These sessions are not designed to replace our on-site training in any way. Instead, these once a month training sessions will enable a company to quickly overview the basics of the system and start using it right away.

If you are interested in attending one of these sessions, please contact the office as soon as possible because seats are limited.

# My Idea of Self-Esteem

by Mike Rydin, HCSS President

One of the buzzwords in education for the past few years is self-esteem. Because it is so popular, there must be some common background in we baby boomers because even I am afflicted somewhat with this concern.

However, my idea of self esteem is much different than the current version of praising kids when they don't deserve it so they feel good about themselves. It is important to me that my kids grow up able to make an accurate assessment of themselves so they can differentiate between those things for which they deserve praise and those they do not.

With good self-analysis, they should have self-confidence knowing where they stand and not be prey to flattery, vanity, and all those traits associated with trying to fool oneself.

One day my 10 year old informed me he was the 2nd best soccer player on his team. I felt it my duty to delicately inform him that the 2nd best soccer player on the team usually kicks the ball more than 5 times in a 45 minute game; that he was in fact, the worst player on the team. That prompted him to go out in the back yard and practice until he kicked a tree root and broke his big toe. Nevertheless, that was the response I wanted. There is no shame in being bad at something. Either give up on it and try something else, or do something about it.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I want my boys to be the best at something. But I figure even being one of the best 3 at something is ok. Look at how many people are covered if you counted the top 3 in each of these activities for each grade:

Soccer , Chess, Comedian, Speller, Math, Science, Violin, Guitar, Cheerleading, Ice Skating, Skateboarding, Swimming, Writer, Photographer, Magician, Drummer, YoYo, Video Games, Gymnast, Fastest Runner, Strongest, Animal Trainer, Karate, Tennis, Artist, Crossword Puzzles, Jeopardy, Wheel Of Fortune, Singer, Piano, Cards, etc.

The list is endless, particularly once they go to high school. And if you are one of the top 3 in your area and are better than most everyone else, they look at you with awe. And in most cases, to be one of the best, you had to work at it and have earned their respect.

I want my boys to work hard to become the best at something, and to then feel good about themselves because they know they deserve it.

## Bid News

**Glenn O. Hawbaker Inc.** (State College, PA) submitted the low bid to build the second leg of Interstate 99 across State Correctional Institution at Rockview land.

<b>Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc.</b>	<b>\$47,517,280.39</b>
<b>New Enterprise Stone &amp; Lime Co.</b>	<b>\$48,140,220.90</b>
HRI, Inc.	\$50,272,160.74

**Logan International Airport Terminal Area Roadways Boston, MA Massport Project 1.673-2**  
**Bid Date: July 29,1998**

<b>Flatiron Structures Company, LLC</b>	<b>\$ 87,129,441</b>
<b>M. Dematteo Construction Co.</b>	<b>\$ 87,160,097</b>
<b>J.F. White</b>	<b>\$ 87,240,000</b>
<b>G.F. Atkinson</b>	<b>\$ 89,585,591</b>
<b>Modern Continental</b>	<b>\$ 96,270,972</b>
Cashman Construction	\$106,256,646
<b>Perini Corp</b>	<b>\$118,078,738</b>

**GLF Construction Corporation** of Miami, FL reported that Bids were received on 12/22/98 for the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) North Central Corridor, NC-3 Line Section. The project consists of 4 stations (3 elevated and 1 at grade level) and 4 miles of line section. GLF Construction Corporation was the low bidder and has been awarded the contract for \$49,903,009.31.

**Butler County, Ohio TID Project SR 129**

	<i>Contract A</i>	<i>Contract B</i>	<i>Contract C</i>
<b>**Kokosing</b>	<b>20,223,801</b>	<b>50,418,868*</b>	<b>23,905,900*</b>
<b>John R.Jurgensen</b>	<b>20,492,046</b>	<b>54,885,850</b>	<b>25,479,640</b>
<b>Complete General</b>	<b>21,252,430</b>		
<b>Barrett Paving</b>	<b>22,111,045</b>		
<b>Smith &amp; Johnson</b>	<b>18,864,112*</b>		
<b>Beaver Excavating</b>		<b>55,688,972</b>	

\*Low Bidders  
**\*\* Kokosing \$92,761,970 Low Bidder on Entire Job**

**Contract No. 91BL9171-D**  
**High Zone 48" Dip Water Main Construction**  
**Laurel, Maryland**

<b>Marona Construction Company</b>	<b>\$2,726,635</b>	<b>(.3%)</b>
Metra Industries	2,735,050	
Cherry Hill Construction	2,800,946	
Concrete General Inc.	2,983,590	

At the June 1998 Florida DOT letting, **Smith & Company** bid a total of 5 projects totalling \$79,732,068.84. They were awarded 3 out of the 5 projects totalling **\$66,426,098.84**. Although it is an accomplishment to achieve these results, **Smith & Company** also only left 2.7% cumulative on the table.

**IDOT Stevenson Expressway Reconstruction 12/4/98**

<b>Baker Heavy Highway</b>	<b>32,122,051.25</b>
<b>Kenny Construction</b>	<b>32,757,478.59</b>
<b>Walsh</b>	<b>33,962,417.84</b>

**NYCDEP KENS-01C**  
**Construction of Stormwater Facilities-Kensico Watershed**  
**Valhalla, NY**  
**Bid 08 OCT 98**

<b>Thalle Construction</b>	<b>1,944,000.00</b>	<b>0.24%</b>
Bilotta Construction	1,948,644.70	
<b>ECCO III</b>	<b>2,075,000.00</b>	
Ben Ciccone	2,355,250.00	

This was the fifth project that **Thalle Construction** bid since implementing HeavyBid for Windows.

*Thanks to all of you who fax in your bid results and keep them coming, we plan to publish them regularly!*

*All Customers using HeavyBid noted in Bold type.*

## Direct Fax Line into Support Department

The support department now has their own fax number and machine conveniently located in their work area. The FAX number is 713-400-7599 and a support person is there to receive the faxes from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. CST Monday thru Friday. If you have a non-urgent question, you can fax your question to this number and a support person will get back with you. Questions regarding reports, forms, etc. are especially easier to answer when the support person can see what is happening. We are confident that this will create yet another way for our customers to quickly receive answers to their questions.

## Come See Us at ConExpo-Con/Agg '99

We know that many of you already have plans to attend this huge event in Las Vegas and we hope that you stop by our booth and say hello.

We are in **Booth N2565** which is located in the Information Technology Pavilion. Show hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., March 23-27 in Las Vegas, Nevada. See ya there!

## HCSS is Y2K Ready

HeavyBid for Windows, HeavyJob for Windows and HeavyBid for DOS 3.8 are each year 2000 (Y2K) compliant. We have also posted a signed letter stating that information on the web site.

## User Tips

### Fast Ways of Moving Around Screens

*HeavyBid for Windows* has several built-in features to make it easy to move around in the system. For instance, to remove the latest window from the screen, you can either click the mouse on the "X" key in the upper right-hand corner, click on a **CANCEL** button, or hit **ESC** (Escape).

Another example is to move the cursor from field to field, left to right, top to bottom, simply click the field with the mouse or hit either the **TAB** or **ENTER** key. **SHIFT TAB** moves back to the previous field. If, however, there are any buttons on the screen with a dashed border indicating the cursor is on that button, **ENTER** will activate the button whereas **TAB** will skip it and go to the next field.

### New Options within the Tree View Entry

Besides the Add Activity and Modify Activity buttons, there is another way

to add detail to your estimate. Simply right click on any item in your estimate tree to see these options.

### Shortcut to Expand All Tree View Items

Highlight the top item in the tree (tripod with your estimate name) and then just hit the "\*" key on your number pad - this automatically expands every item in the tree.

### Quick Ways to Cut & Paste

Three handy keystrokes that are good to know especially when entering a lot of data are:

**CTRL C**=Copy highlighted data.  
**CTRL X**=Cut highlighted data.  
**CTRL V**=Paste highlighted data.

*FYI: Several of these time-saving keystrokes found in HeavyBid for Windows also apply to all Windows software!*

## Thank you, Thank you

We just wanted to thank all of you who keep us informed of any marketing propaganda that you receive via mail and fax from other software companies that specifically mention our company. We are overwhelmed with the number of calls and faxes that we receive from you and we really appreciate your help. It's such a great feeling to know that we have such loyal customers out there! Keep up the good work!

Quality Estimating &  
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