

CASE STUDY

C&S Companies[®] Partners with Infotech[®] to Standardize Cloud-Based Construction

CHALLENGE

Standardizing C&S Companies' aviation practices nationwide requires time, effort, and tools the organization can trust to hold up at scale. Principal Engineer Greg Fehrman wasn't just looking for a piece of software - he sought a technology partner and a productive business relationship.

RESULTS

By partnering with Infotech to implement Appia on C+S Companies' transportation and aviation operations, Fehrman and his team have increased their capacity, built strong relationships with contractors, and saved approximately \$100,000/month in travel.

**INCREASED
PROJECT
CAPACITY**

**IMPROVED
CONTRACTOR
RELATIONSHIPS**

**SUBSTANTIAL
COST
SAVINGS**

SOLUTION



Appia[®] for construction administration and inspection paired with **Doc Express[®]** for paperless contracting and document workflows.

ANNUAL USE

- + Office location: **National use**
- + Project amount range: **\$129K-\$64M**
- + Team size: **10-12 per project**
- + Project types: **transportation and aviation projects**
- + Annual projects used: **~50**

The Benefits of Standardizing with Appia

Greg Fehrman, Principal Engineer at C+S Companies, uses Appia on roughly 50 projects annually, located across the country.

While C+S Companies' transportation work happens solely in New York, Appia has enabled Fehrman to introduce universal practices for its national aviation business. As is often the case when processes are standardized, this shift has brought a host of benefits to the C+S Companies team.

Report Accuracy and Consistency

"A lot of our highway/bridge projects were one-person shows. And if you have 20 of those projects, how do you check to make sure things were done correctly? Well, now that can be checked remotely."

With features that allow inspectors to gather report data at the job site and automatically sync in real-time with the office, quality control becomes significantly easier. Ensuring these reports are consistent and accurate upfront and throughout the project means that close out goes smoothly and the team is prepared in the event of an audit.

"We have the structure to get the same results, so if we ever get to the point of an audit, the consistency is there... I don't know of anything else out there that is as consistent for a site/civil application as Appia."

Enhanced Project Capacity and Marketing

"Standardizing processes" sounds rigid, but companies that have clear and concise practices across the board ultimately improve their flexibility. By creating consistency and building a shared bank of knowledge, the C+S Companies team has increased capacity and introduced optionality to both the aviation and transportation sides of the business. When team members join projects, their knowledge of Appia means they can instantly hit the ground running.

"The advantage of using Appia is that so many people are using it that when we bring on a new person specifically for a project, they've worked with it before. It helps with our capacity to perform."

Appia also acts as a marketing tool for C+S Companies. Fehrman and his team can be transparent about their entire process upfront, showing clients exactly how their projects will be managed. In an industry that used to be plagued by, as Fehrman describes it, an "I'll show you my cards after you show me your cards"

mentality, the transparency that Appia affords is a big step forward.

"We use it as a marketing tool. We went into a \$60m Cincinnatti runway rehab project and showed them how we would be doing it in Appia, and they were very impressed. It's added value that we're providing to our clients."

Inspector Autonomy and Reduced Travel

Since Appia sends data in real-time from the field to the field office, the inspectors at C+S Companies do not need to physically enter the field office to enter reports, nor do project managers need to travel to the job site to check reports. With the ability to use a phone application or an iPad out in the field, inspectors can write their reports as the day goes on, leading to neater and more accurate data. The reduction in travel also leads to significant cost savings for the client.

"If we use an example of one person traveling to 20 projects to check reports, we're probably saving close to \$100,000 a month in travel expenses."

Working with Contractors in Appia and Doc Express

C+S Companies partnership approach with Infotech mirrors how he treats his contractors. Transparency and trust are at the forefront, and the working relationship is much more of a partnership than something merely transactional. It's common practice to give contractors read-only access to

ensure an open flow of information between contractors, project owners, and the C+S Companies management and inspection team. This access ensures that issues are resolved quickly and don't snowball into bigger problems when it comes time to produce a pay estimate.

"Things are resolved on a day-to-day basis, not a month-to-month basis. We don't have to provide that information; we enable them to get it. The contractors have really liked that freedom. Now, when it's the end of the month, you just hit the button, and there are no secrets when the draft estimate goes to the contractor; they already know the quantities."

To take things a step further in making things easy for the contractor, C&S Companies uses Doc Express, a document management and paperless contracting tool included with every Appia license. The team uses Doc Express to collect, review, and transition construction documents by creating a project-specific inbox for contractors to use.

"The goal is to create a system that's easy for the contractor to use. And the more and more we use Doc Express, the more we're seeing that contractors have already used it."

Embracing Cloud Computing at C+S Companies

Prior to using Appia, Fehrman was no stranger to Infotech. After meeting a member of our sales team at a transportation conference in Saratoga, NY, Fehrman learned more about Infotech's FieldManager® software. He partnered with Infotech to begin implementing the software in New York state, home to C+S Companies' transportation projects. A few years later, cloud computing entered the scene, and Infotech launched Appia.

When Fehrman heard about Appia's cloud-based capabilities, he was ready to elevate C+S Companies' project management technology to the next level.

C&S Companies became the first private company to purchase Appia and began implementing the software on its New York transportation projects. Fehrman noted that very little training was

"It was when cloud computing was really just starting. I said, 'you mean to tell me we only need a web browser to operate this?' And we were hooked."

required to start using Appia, though there was some resistance to the change from people used to doing everything by hand. To those folks, Fehrman had a simple message: "We're dealing with data now, we're not dealing with recording."



Using Appia to Standardize Processes Nationwide

Around eight years ago, Fehrman stepped into his current role with C&S Companies:

“My role is to lead in the creation of a platform for our national aviation construction practice. To get ourselves [standardized] across the country so that people can be relocated to different areas and we’re using the same protocol and processes.”

With roughly 50 annual projects across 21 locations, this was no easy task, but Fehrman had a plan: **“When they asked me to come back into aviation, I brought [Appia] with me. I said ‘this is non-negotiable; if I manage this, this is coming in.’”**

Working with Infotech to Meet Evolving Needs

To ensure Appia does everything Fehrman and his team need it to do, he works with Infotech to make enhancement requests. Rather than a faceless vendor, Infotech acts as a partner with a vested interest in helping Fehrman and his team reach their goals.

“Our partners at Infotech, as we came up with things that we needed it to do, they’ve been receptive and adopted some of the suggestions we had and

implemented them into the application.”

Infotech has worked with C+S Companies to add features that show projected cash flows in the dashboard, add different reports, and introduce flexibility to the engineer’s report. This working relationship means that Appia’s capabilities grow alongside the C+S Companies team, and Fehrman trusts that the Appia development team will have his back.

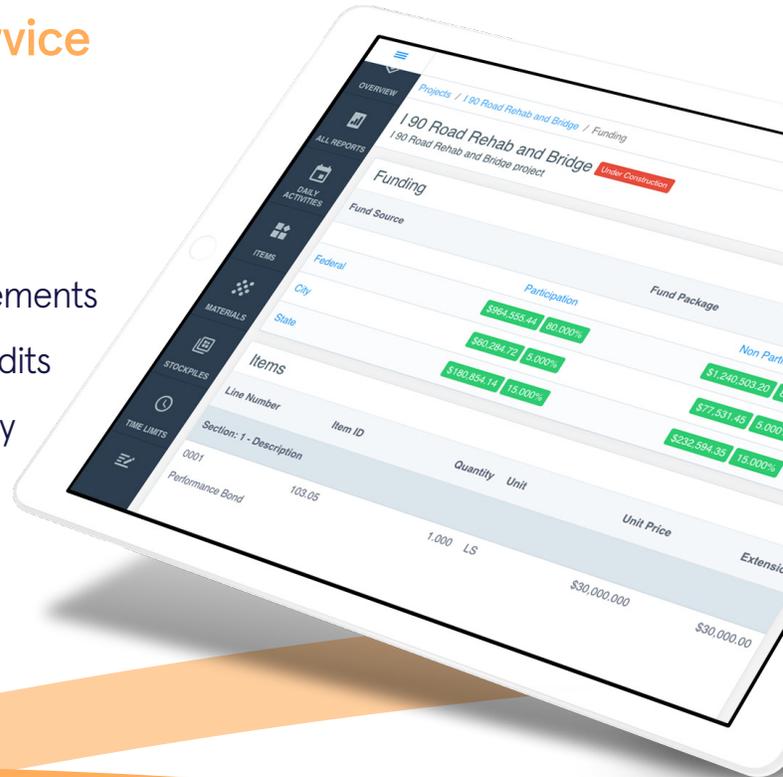


“They dedicate time to our needs. I tell our team that the developers at Infotech are going to power us with their applications to bring us to a national level. We’re relying on them as a partner, and that’s how they act. They want us to succeed, and that’s what makes it great.”

Overcome the Challenges of Construction Administration and Inspection

Streamline your processes with a web-based, mobile-accessible service built on intuitive use and flexibility.

- + Increase your project capacity with productivity features
- + Work with the contractor for accurate measurements
- + Improve report consistency to protect from audits
- + Reduce travel and increase inspector autonomy
- + Win more projects by showing complete process upfront



Visit infotechinc.com/appia to learn more.

Infotech provides web-based software solutions for construction administration and inspection, secure internet bidding, and paperless contracting. Our powerful software solutions are developed in line with our core values of innovation, integrity, and insights. Founded in 1977 by two university professors, our extensive history with the construction industry enables a deeper understanding of the issues facing consultants, contractors, and inspectors. We seek to develop long-standing relationships with our clients and provide them with the tools and support for their operations to thrive.

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