

PERFECT PROJECTS DEMAND PERFECT SOLUTIONS

COMBINING THE RIGHT SOFTWARE WITH
THE RIGHT MOBILE COMPUTING HARDWARE



Company **Brasfield & Gorrie**
Industry **Construction**
Country **USA**
Website **brasfieldgorrie.com**



BACKGROUND

Customer Focused Quality with Style

Brasfield & Gorrie started in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1921 as the Thomas C. Brasfield Company and was purchased by Miller Gorrie in 1964. Since then, they have grown steadily across the South, and now have offices in Atlanta, Orlando, Raleigh, Nashville, and Jacksonville and manage a diverse portfolio that includes projects in healthcare, retail, education, office, and industrial sectors. Today, Brasfield & Gorrie is the 32nd largest contractor and the 16th largest general builder in the United States, but they maintain focus on the needs of their clients and communities to

create excellence in every project they undertake. That reputation for excellence and attention to detail extends to Brasfield & Gorrie's latest project as well: a 35-story luxury condominium called 1010 Midtown in the heart of downtown Atlanta with 30,000 sq. ft. of retail and an 820-space parking garage. The \$159 million project is phase one in a three-phase plan to inject life into a neglected section of the city's famous Peachtree Street, turning it into "Midtown Mile," a shopping, entertainment, and living area comparable with Chicago's Magnificent Mile and New York City's Madison Avenue.

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Steve Gilbert

— Corporate Operations IT Manager

Since 1010 Midtown is dedicated to upscale urban appeal and its condos feature standard floor to ceiling windows, hardwood flooring, and marble countertops, engineers and architects have to get everything just right for delivery. That means instituting a new, efficient quality assurance and punch list systems to track and correct any construction defects. Brasfield & Gorrie's previous quality control processes were long and involved, taking extra time both in the field and in the trailer.

First, up-to-date documents and plans were gathered, along with previous inspections and issues lists. These were then taken to the job site and marked on paper to explain any defects. Back at the office, notes and drawings were retyped or updated, digital photos were attached as documentation, and marked-up plans were scanned. When that was done, everything was pulled into a master list, and reports were manually distributed to subcontractors and superintendents. These steps were time consuming, often redundant, and contained many opportunities for errors to appear and propagate. Documentation was hard to track, and communication with subcontractors was cumbersome.

CHALLENGE

Find the Right System

Brasfield & Gorrie elected to pilot two software products—LATISTA Field and its competitor—during the 1010 Midtown building process to see which system better met their needs. They worked with each software system for 60 days, using Xplore rugged tablet PCs. One floor was inspected with each system, and the project team assessed results. LATISTA worked with Brasfield & Gorrie on the front end to establish custom quality assurance features like one-touch icons, pre-set defect language, and detailed reporting capabilities. With these, users were able to track specific deficiencies, how often they occurred, and by whom and could generate reports of this data with the click of a button. Reports could then be distributed automatically via email and viewed by subcontractors over a web portal. LATISTA also allowed plans and documents to be uploaded directly to tablet PCs and a server at the office. Plans could then be marked up in the field and would synchronize instantly with other users when the user was next in the office.

Xplore tablet PCs made these features available to Brasfield & Gorrie engineers and inspectors out in the field. Workers used Xplore F5 tablets

REQUIREMENTS

Starting with 1010 Midtown, Brasfield & Gorrie saw an opportunity to make this normally laborious quality control phase of construction more efficient and so came up with a list of requirements:

- Unified, repeatable punch list process for this project and subsequent ones
- Mobile tools for quality control reporting, especially plan access and mark-up
- Web-based access for project team and subcontractors
- Efficient, effective communications to subcontractors and other third parties
- Defect rate and type statistics tracked and provided to estimators
- Flexible, extensive, auto-generated reports with plans, drawings and photos
- Hard-working, easy to maintain portable hardware



loaded with LATISTA software and PDF versions of building plans and built-in digital cameras to document any issues that were created. Tablets could connect to the Internet quickly and wirelessly for easy synchronization, but were fully functional in offline mode as well. Plus, they were rugged, able to survive moisture, dust, and the occasional drop.

RESULTS

LATISTA is the choice of Brasfield & Gorrie

LATISTA's web-based functions and the personal attention they were willing to give Brasfield & Gorrie's concerns were very important to the construction company. They were able to reduce the punch list and issue resolution cycle to achieve a more consistent, collaborative process throughout. Plus, the construction staff really enjoyed how easy the software was to use. Steve Gilbert, Brasfield & Gorrie's Corporate Operations IT Manager, said that having LATISTA's web functions was great, not only for synchronizing data within the construction site, but also for communicating with off-site subcontractors.

"Getting issues to and from subs is so important on a large project like this. We hand them a hard copy and send them a version by email, and if they have any questions they can call us and we can bring it up on screen immediately and see exactly what they're talking about," he said. "We don't have to track paper because everything is in the database and available any time."

Subcontractors and other third-party users were also able to view relevant data through LATISTA's web portal. Gilbert also approved of the work LATISTA put in before the project to standardize the punch list process: "Taking a little time up front to put in those common deficiencies saved a lot of time in

the long run," he said. When creating a punch list issue using the tablet, Brasfield & Gorrie engineers could select pre-set issues from a drop-down list, and all occurrences of those issues would be tracked to give a clear picture of how subcontractors were performing and how issue resolution was proceeding.

This information allowed Brasfield & Gorrie inspectors to reduce issue turnaround time from the days or weeks it once was to 24 hours. "We had time for so many more issues than we would have had before," said Gilbert. "It's so easy to put them into LATISTA—it's effortless—and getting them out to your subcontractors is so much quicker that you get a better return." The data also facilitates better subcontractor evaluations for future projects. LATISTA's simple interface allowed Brasfield & Gorrie to get everyone working on the same system. "At first, subcontractors were kind of skeptical because it looked too organized," said Gilbert. "Now they all really like it because it makes everyone so much more productive." New users were also easily acquainted with the system, which made it easy to generate custom reports from data stored on the server. "We can show them how to call up a report, and they can do everything they need right away," said Gilbert. Automatic reporting kept Brasfield & Gorrie engineers informed through the punch list process, and helps ensure that materials and people are in place and working properly. In the end, Brasfield & Gorrie recommended LATISTA software for future projects, as it fulfilled all of their requirements and allowed them to customize features as they liked. The Midtown Atlanta project was a great test case for LATISTA software and Xplore tablet PCs. The system proved to be perfect for making the punch list process faster and more effective.

