

GENERAL CONTRACTOR WINS NEW BUSINESS

CLIENT PROFILE

PRECISION COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS

- Designs, engineers, implements and supports telecommunications technologies for the oil and gas industries in Western Canada
- Offices in Edmonton, Calgary and Fort McMurray, Alberta
- 30 employees
- 25 sub-contractors



Precision Communication Solutions' expedited contractor qualification process is winning new and repeat business from oil and gas companies that need contractors working at their jobsite in 48 hours or less.

"In this industry, word gets around and people know how quickly and effectively PCS qualifies contractors," says Randy, Director of Operations at PCS. "We now represent our customer, the oil and gas firms, as the general contractor with control over the various subs."

It's a win-win for everyone involved. The customers turn the qualification, management and liability over to PCS and in turn, PCS is rewarded for taking on both the role and the risk. Because of CQN Advantage, the PCS business model has shifted slightly from sub-contractor to general contractor and there has been a positive impact on the top and bottom lines.



"Our 15-year relationship with CQ Network and our more recent commitment to their CQN Advantage registry platform has provided long-term benefits," says Randy. "When asked for referrals, I recommend only CQ Network and CQN Advantage – no one else."

Four years ago, PCS took a proactive, forward-looking approach and became one of CQN Advantage's first client users. It was exactly what PCS needed to qualify and manage their contractors and the fact Randy was able to partner with CQN Advantage as they fine-tuned it was an added bonus!

"In the early days and even now, CQN Advantage acts on user feedback and recommendations to tailor the program to our needs," says Randy. "It's an incredibly comprehensive program that addresses every potential issue, but if you need something different, just ask and it will be adjusted for you."

For example, PCS deals with sub-contractors who face an extraordinarily wide range of risk levels, from extreme, when a technician climbs a 300 ft. tower or works from a barge on a highly toxic tailing pond, to very low risk with the software engineer who works only from his home office. Thanks to CQN Advantage, PCS can request only the data and certification relevant to the applicant's actual risk levels, then easily and quickly access it.



KEY CHALLENGES

- Manual prequalification and contractor management system
- 1 to 2 weeks (30 to 40 hours) to qualify each contractor
- Labour-intensive, inefficient use of employees' expertise, experience and time
- Unwieldy, error-prone, non-standardized document filing and retrieval
- Slow, ineffective, frustratingly difficult file transfer
- Damaged, misplaced files and documents

CONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

- CQN Advantage

KEY BENEFITS/RESULTS

- Automated, digital contractor registry
- 48 hours to qualify contractors which is earning new and repeat business
- Frees up employees to focus on more value-added tasks
- Seamless, streamlined questionnaire and document management, filing and retrieval
- Instant, effective, easy file uploads
- Integrity of files and documents is preserved

"I have to double check the physical or digitized documentation that solidly supports their claims and demonstrates there is a history – that's it's not a one-time thing," says Randy. "I can't take anything they tell me at face value, because it puts PCS at enormous risk."

Before CQN Advantage, Randy and his team members had to thumb through hundreds of pages of paper. Now they rely on CQN Advantage's search tools to carefully but rapidly scroll and scan to confirm the facts and double check data, for example the all-important WCB codes performance data.

"It makes it easier for PCS and everyone that we deal with – I enter my name and CQN Advantage takes me to the page and the line on which I need to sign," says Randy. "It now takes me 40 minutes, instead of three or more hours, to get that done – I appreciate these features, as I'm sure other users do."

Contractors appreciate CQN Advantage because once they received their link to the system from PCS, they upload the required documents, fill out a customized questionnaire and they have completed their process, usually in a day or two. It's easier and more efficient for them.

Since the government began further mandating certifications and safety programs, PCS has had to deal with documentation that often detailed its contractors' safety training and practices over the course of up to 500 pages. Most files were far too large to send by email and certain systems wouldn't upload even the most commonly accepted formats. The back and forth communication spent resolving those issues was frustrating, time consuming and challenging.

Many PDFs were printed, then copied and PCS consumed an enormous amount of paper to qualify some of its contractors. The courier costs incurred were also cumulative as were the many related time delays. By taking on CQN Advantage and moving away from this manual system, these issues were eliminated and PCS is able to focus on their contractors and qualification pieces that were important to them.

"It's absolutely on us to ensure they are compliant and it's an extraordinary amount of reading particularly if we're qualifying three or four contractors a week," says Randy. "We're no longer stuck in a holding pattern because we're waiting on the three staff that had been assigned this truly laborious review process."

CQN Advantage is designed to let PCS decide which contractors qualify on the spot, need to submit or complete additional information or do not meet the criteria. Since the ultimate responsibility for each contractor's presence on a job site lies only with PCS, the company's management team wants to ensure PCS is making the final decision. It's important that "field people" not "safety people" or even "industry consultants" assess the applicants because they're the only ones who really understand the oil and gas industry's incredibly stringent safety parameters.

"As much as we trust our CQN Advantage application, we're the ones that are consistently in the field and on the job sites, so we know first-hand what's needed for each project and customer," says Randy. "CQN Advantage gives us that option unlike some of the competing contractor management systems." In view of recent industry fatalities and the related concerns regarding safety and liability, diligence, traceability and transparency are more vital than ever before.

CQN Advantage streamlines what was an onerous, yet vital and inescapable process. PCS is able to respond to both customers and contractors more quickly because Advantage eliminates the bottlenecks and minimizes the wait times.

"We're focused on managing the business and no longer feel like monkeys with stamps," says Randy.

Over the years, Randy has come to rely on his CQN Advantage account manager for insights and a quick response when it's needed. He also knows just how diligent she is based on the frequency of her follow-ups and friendly reminders.

"I like knowing that Ronnie and CQN Advantage have my back and always have," says Randy. "It's led to a long-term, highly collaborative relationship that's built on their superior products and services as well as the mutual trust that has developed over time."

