

Plymouth startup creates One Spot app to streamline work of property managers

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Before a client buys a commercial building, Tim Jackson's team of maintenance technicians has to walk the property to check for any potential issues.

Whether it's the condition of the HVAC system or the locations of the utility meters, his team would jot down details on paper and take photos before the findings were cut and pasted together to form a report, a process that could take several weeks.

But with the help of new Twin Cities property management software One Spot, Jackson's team can complete their assessments in a fraction of the time and save a large chunk of money.

"It takes an enormous amount of time to put these together. ... Now, we can turn and burn these things," said Jackson, vice president of Engineering and Property Services at the Twin Cities office of real estate company Colliers International.

One Spot had its full commercial launch last month as a tool for property inspectors, tenants and primarily property managers who oversee the day-to-day maintenance of commercial [properties](#) like office buildings, industrial warehouses and retail strip malls.

The Plymouth startup allows users to report on property repairs and assets in real-time. The mobile app lets property managers and tenants take photos of areas around their property that need repair and upload

their geolocation points (the software is integrated with Google Maps). The points can be tagged with different categories and comments before they are e-mailed out for bids for contractors or pushed to internal team members. Tenants can also report issues and can see when a problem is fixed as well.

"The commercial property manager, they are operating with things that are 10 years old. ... Everything is so disorganized," said Keith Pelatowski, chief executive of One Spot.

Technology is better used in residential management of large apartment complexes than in commercial property management, Pelatowski said.

Many times, property managers communicate with tenants and contractors through a mix of Snapchat, text, e-mail, and phone calls. But some communication can often fall through the cracks, Pelatowski said, with managers sometimes not hearing from tenants about issues, work being executed without managers and tenants knowing it was completed, and fees not being collected for work done.

One Spot is supposed to help streamline communication and improve the workflow, Pelatowski said.

One Spot was the brainchild of Rich Byrne and Steve Bartz, co-owners of Twin City Outdoor Services, or TCOS, a concrete-replacement and snow-management company. Several years ago, TCOS created an internal digital platform to keep track of bid work more efficiently. The clients liked what they saw, which led Bartz and Byrne to invest in a platform that could serve a range of users. After about two years of development, One Spot was piloted last year by 30 property-management companies in the Twin Cities.

"What is really exciting is the 'user-centered design' approach, which

means our customers can directly shape the future of the software based on their input and needs—in order to solve their problems," Byrne said in a statement.

Colliers' engineering and property services division helped to test the One Spot program and became an official client at the beginning of this year. According to a case study, One Spot on average reduced Colliers' time spent on a property condition assessment report from 40 hours to six hours and the cost to complete the report from \$769 to just \$115.

Utilizing One Spot has also had a beneficial impact on Colliers later winning more business to continue to provide maintenance for a property, Jackson said. While there are other technology services that Colliers could use, they normally cost more and have longer contracts, Jackson said.

"The (One Spot) program and the economics fit well for us," he said.

Colliers' property management division also piloted the program last year with some of its portfolio. After recently reviewing some of the program's updates, the department is considering becoming an official client, said Brett Greenfield, portfolio manager at Colliers.

"I think that it is a fantastic app and I think that it definitely can improve the lives of our property managers in certain situations," he said.

There are other improvements that the One Spot team is already planning. Future development could include augmented-reality technology and possibly 360 degree views to better service the inside of multilevel buildings and give One Spot "a bit of a competitive advantage," Pelatowski said. The company plans to also expand its focus to include the property management of residential complexes.

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