



**Welcome to the March 2006 Edition of the AEC Managing Partner Newsletter. As always we are dedicated to helping A/E firms earn the profits they deserve for their creative efforts.**

**In this Months Newsletter:**

- 1. Getting Back to Basics - Ten Things You Can Do**
- 2. Ajera Financial and Project Management Software - A first look (for me) and Initial Impressions**
- 3. Dramatically Improving Cash Flow and Collections Seminar on April 6, 2006**
- 4. New York University Guest Lecture on April 5, 2006**
- 5. Herb Cannon to Speak at SMPS/PMSA Build Business National Convention on August 19, 2006**
- 6. Herb Cannon to Speak at Society of Design Administration National Convention on June 9th 2006**

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### **Ajera - Software for the Rest of Us?**

I just visited Dun & Bradstreet online to do some market research and discovered there are 78,470 engineering and 35,622 architecture firms in the United States. The large number of A/E firms is somewhat surprising. I had been working under the dated assumption that there were about 85,000 in total. However what really floored me was the average size of the firms. The average engineering firm has 13 employees and the average architecture firm has 7 employees.

Well it finally seems there is a software company that has woken up to that fact and developed an accounting and project management software for the small to mid size market. The Ajera software is targeted to firms that are using a combination of QuickBooks, Excel and Word to manage their accounting and projects. At first glance, I would like to say that this is the right product at the right time – but it is more likely the right product that is long overdue. Hopefully this program will gain popularity and serve as a wake up call to A/E software providers that most companies in this business do not have 200+ employees and unlimited support resources.

I have been running some test data on the program and I am impressed with the flexibility and power that it provides. The program itself has the look and feel of QuickBooks but with the ability to produce project reports in both a spreadsheet and graphical format.

Prior to installing the system, I took their online demonstration which clearly explained the benefits and capabilities of Ajera. I then used the training CD included with the software to gain an overview of what is involved in using the program. I can say without hesitation that the training CD is the most comprehensive I have ever seen for any software. If the program performance even approaches the quality of the CD training it will be a home run.

So far, I have set up the system and have been running some sample data as my schedule permits. In comparison to competing products, I found the system much easier to install, set up and make changes as needed. The sample data that I have run through the system has worked flawlessly. The project reports are easy to generate and easy to read.

If you are using QuickBooks or the outdated Sema-4 program, I urge you to visit the Ajera website at [www.axiumae.com](http://www.axiumae.com) and check out all of the details for yourself. In a future newsletter I will review the program features in more detail.

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By Herbert M. Cannon

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