



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY | Construction

Hilscher-Clarke Electric Company

“Accounting in the construction industry is extremely unique and complex – it involves things that are not found in other industries. So you can’t be a generalist and provide value to a contractor like us. You need to be an expert. And that’s why we’re with 415 Group.”

– Scott Goodspeed, CEO, Hilscher-Clarke



HILSCHER-CLARKE ELECTRIC COMPANY With roots that can be traced back to 1901, Hilscher-Clarke is a Canton, Ohio-based electrical contracting and engineering firm with approximately 500 field electricians serving a variety of industries, including healthcare, chemical, steel, food, tech, and oil and gas. CEO Scott Goodspeed (top right) and COO John Fether (left) value 415 Group for its knowledge and expertise in contracting and construction.

WATCH: To see the 3-min. film, go to bit.ly/415videos

WHEN A LONGTIME RELATIONSHIP DOESN'T HAVE THE POWER YOU NEED, YOU SWITCH.

In 2016, Hilscher-Clarke had just celebrated its 100th anniversary and was on the verge of a three-year expansion that would see the company grow 20 percent by 2019. It was getting great accounting advice on how to transform its budgeting, financial reporting and corporate structure into something more modern, sophisticated and strategic.

Problem was, the ideas weren't coming from its accounting firm of record. They were coming from a 415 Group partner who sat on Hilscher-Clarke's board. "415 Group was just there in an advisory role, but they were the ones who kept bringing us the good ideas," CEO Scott Goodspeed recalls. "They were a resource that John (Fether, COO) and I could lean on, an advisor we could trust." One day, he says, a light bulb went off: if 415 Group's team is providing all the value, why aren't *they* Hilscher-Clarke's accountants? "We made the decision to link arms with 415 Group."

LOOKING AT THE NUMBERS IN A NEW LIGHT

A leading contractor whose clients include some of the biggest brands in Northeastern Ohio – Kraft Foods, Timken Steel, Marathon Oil and Aultman

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Hospital, to name a few – Hilscher-Clarke is the go-to firm for many of the area's highest-profile electrical projects. The renovation of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. The expansion of Brewster Dairy, the nation's largest producer of Swiss cheese. The construction of Timken's Faircrest plant, the most technologically advanced steel-making operation in North America. And most recently, the wiring of massive, energy-hungry data centers for the world's largest tech firms.

"We're talking about projects that require teams of 100 or more electricians working in multiple shifts on a very tight schedule," Fether says. "We work on really cool things, but there are a lot of moving parts. 415 Group understands how these parts move – and how each one can affect different items in your financial statements. This is not your normal number-crunching."

THE KNOWLEDGE TO NAVIGATE A COMPLEX INDUSTRY

The people at 415 Group, Fether says, are unique because they're up to speed on not just all things accounting, but they attend all of the leading contractor conferences every year.

"They can see something in the numbers and relate that to a problem you'd only find in construction: a delay in a job, or a compression in a job, or some retainage that didn't get released, or retainage that shouldn't be retainage," Fether explains. "You're performing work over a time duration that may be short or long, and may be set up in many different ways: a contract, or time and material, with hundreds of different rates and situations. That doesn't mean you have to know everything, but you have to understand how to find the answers. 415 Group can do that."

415 GROUP: VALUED FOR ITS EXPERTISE AND INTEGRITY

Hilscher-Clarke sees 415 Group as more than just an accounting firm. They're a longtime partner, Goodspeed says. "We're known as a leader in our area not just because we provide high-quality electrical services. It's the fact that people trust us – integrity is ultimately what we sell," he says. "It's the same with 415 Group. We trust them and what they're doing to grow our business."

Fether adds: "They're always looking out for us, keeping us moving in the right direction. They focus on the things we might not be looking at, or might not see, protecting us. We know we're not alone. In 415 Group, we've got a partner that's got our back."

415 Group is a leading provider of strategic business solutions, including audit and assurance services, tax planning and compliance, business valuation, forensic accounting and IT outsourcing for publicly and privately held companies.

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