

A New Way of Doing Business

You might not expect a highly successful construction company to go into software development, but then again, Carrier Mausoleums Construction is not your typical design-build company.

Established in 1984, CMC has earned a reputation of offering comprehensive and innovative approaches to serve the needs of the cemetery, funeral and cremation industry.

iBronze continues that tradition.

Launched earlier this year, iBronze is the first cloud-based visualization and retail point-of-sale software application designed specially for cemeteries, funeral homes and product manufacturers.

“It’s been a couple of years that our customers have been asking us to supply and give them a good quality product as we do for mausoleums and columbaria,” said Sébastien Litalien, sales manager, Eastern USA, and director of bronze products for CMC. “We decided that if we were going to sell more bronze to them, we needed to have that kind of software.”

The application is very visual and easy-to-use, with Litalien calling it “a tool that is going to be a game changer in the industry.”

As a cloud-based application, iBronze runs and lives in a Web browser, explained Joshua P. Lintz, senior director of marketing and strategic development for CMC, adding, “The only thing a customer

or end-user would need is Internet access.”

iBronze’s data rich, data intensive application allows customers to create their own private label or white label through their individual funeral service firm. While iBronze will be the global administrator, it has the ability to create site administrators at local firms. “Customers will have their own instance of the program, where they can manage all of the firm’s data, all the sales teams and all the sales productivity relevant to selling bronze accessories.”

But what Lintz and Litalien are most excited about, what they believe is the absolute game changer, is iBronze’s multivendor capability. “What it means is that it is vendor agnostic,” Lintz noted. “We have this program that is populated full of CMC bronze products, but it also gives our customers the ability to upload key vendors’ products.”

Housing multiple vendors in one place, it takes people out of the days where you had to sit around a desk in a funeral home and search through multiple vendors’ catalogs trying to find that perfect flower or military emblem, Lintz said. “Getting rid of that cumbersome catalog environment

was really important for us.”

CMC is so confident in its iBronze division, its products and pricing strategy that it has said to customers, “You can invite other vendors and put their products in this system and manage 100 percent of the business on the iBronze system,” Lintz said.

CMC is well aware that customers are faced with many challenges related to sourcing, purchasing and procuring merchandise, but by creating a vendor agnostic platform in iBronze, the problem is solved, Lintz said. “All the sourcing is in one place, and all the purchasing is done through the application – from the individual instance of creating a memorial order to converting that memorial order, aggregating all of that data into a collective purchase order and then dispatching that collective purchase order to the vendors that are applicable,” he said. “You have now put in a very powerful position a small cemetery or a large cemetery.”

For families, that means a photorealistic custom memorial can be created right on screen and in real-time. Products can be selected with a click of a button, and bronze and engraved lettering can be edited in real time. In addition, iBronze makes it easy to



“...a game changer in the industry.”
- Sébastien Litalien

But iBronze is much more than a design tool. The software application also offers cemeteries and funeral homes a whole new way of doing business. By offering centralized management, iBronze helps eliminate redundancies and delays. It also streamlines the vendor management process and provides the ability to control retail margins and reduce pricing errors. The application

upload a portrait for added customization.

“The process of shopping – or what we like to call the process of discovery – is made a lot cleaner, a lot simpler and a lot more elegant,” Lintz said. For example, Lintz said, if a family is designing a loved one’s mausoleum crypt, and the sales counselor knows the family wants to use bronze letters and some type of adornment, instead of going back and forth between several different catalogues where there could possibly be hundreds of options per category, iBronze allows a cemetery to create a custom pared-down catalogue.

“Most cemeteries do not sell 100 percent of products offered by each vendor, so this way they can search through and offer (only) what is most sellable,” Lintz said. “So with iBronze, what shows up in your gallery is only what the funeral firm has elected to sell.” In turn, he added, that makes the shopping process more relevant.

The user experience has been designed so that it is very intuitive. “If you’re sitting with a family and you’re a cemetery counselor you can say, ‘I know you want some sort of products with butterflies on it,’ and you can then go to the tag cloud and type ‘butter-

flies,’ and it will pull every single product that has been tagged with butterflies. Instead of searching through possibly thousands of products, you can shortcut that through the tag cloud.”

All of CMC bronze products that exist in iBronze have already been done with the relevant tags, Lintz noted. If a cemetery adds another vendor product, it would be up to the cemetery to add the description, part number, relevant tags, wholesale and retail pricing and all the characteristics that would define an individual product record.

In designing the application, Lintz said CMC said the company’s hope was that its clients and all their sales counselors would use the iBronze software in 100 percent of their family arrangements. “So what that means is you have a family counselor whose responsibility is both emotionally and business-wise to devote their attention to the family,” he said. “We couldn’t create software that was difficult to use and commanded the majority of their attention. So we made sure the counselor could drive the application with one eye on the screen and one hand. We didn’t want the counselor to turn his back on the family to operate the program.”

also makes it easier to generate orders and distribute purchase orders. The end result is more time for the sales team to sell.

There is no question that the software, which went into development last fall, and had a soft beta launch in February, is a game changing software, Lintz said. “There is no vendor that can offer anything similar to this. There is such a powerful platform that every cemetery and every funeral home across North America now has access to it, and the best part is it is free for customers to use.”

While CMC is not a software company, it is a leader in the bronze business. “Our vision in the bronze division was to raise the standard on the bronze industry in North America,” Litalien said. “This software application will do that.”

Lintz added that there was another reason for CMC to offer a technology-based solution. “Somebody has to,” he said. “CMC has always positioned itself as a leader and an innovator in every product category that it has competed in. Developing this software is something that had to happen.” •