

**WIN MORE BIDS**



**Roll-Up Series™ • Super L Series™ • QuikRuler™**

**The Benefits of**  
.....  
**Cost Estimating**  
.....  
**with a**  
.....  
**GTCO CalComp**  
.....  
**Digitizer**  
.....

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### Making the Switch to Computerized Cost Estimating

If you are an estimator who has yet to computerize or one that is considering the addition of a digitizer to your present computer system, this booklet will help to explain what a digitizer is, how it works, and how your business will benefit by the addition of a GTCO CalComp Super L Series™ digitizer, Roll-Up Series™ digitizer or QuikRuler™ measuring workstation.

There is hardly an application better suited to computerization than cost estimating. Advances have been made to computer estimating programs which have facilitated the transition to computerization for estimators. To remain successful in an increasingly competitive market, many estimating businesses have already made the switch to computerized cost estimating and have realized many benefits by doing so.

Because there are many options available when shopping for a computer system today, our advice is to first list your specific needs and then examine the products and software available that meet your criteria. Check the reputation and experience of the manufacturer or developer of the system you select and be certain that customer service is as important to the manufacturer as it is to you.

## COMPUTER ESTIMATING

### Missing Bid Deadlines Because You Don't Have Time to Estimate Costs?

**H**ave you ever been forced to turn down the opportunity to bid on a project because there was no time to produce the estimate?

If you answered yes, the solution to your estimating backlog is a computer estimating system. Computerized cost estimating with a digitizer allows an estimator to produce three to four times more bids in shorter periods of time than manual estimating. And submitting more bids increases the potential number of jobs you will secure. Computerized estimating with a digitizer quickly pays off...with more bids, more contracts, increased profits and greater accuracy. Creating consistent bids that can be easily read, analyzed and revised will increase your bottom line and provide an advantage that will ensure your success in an increasingly competitive market.

The following case study taken from Carleton Coulter's article in Remodeling Magazine further illustrates the benefits of computer estimating with a digitizer.

## A CASE STUDY

**Case Description:** *The case is that of a remodeler with a \$10,000 average job size and 4.5% profit margin. His goal is to raise volume by 50% in the next year. The benefits he receives from converting to computer estimating include the following:*

**1** It is generally agreed upon by most remodelers that a computer estimating system with a digitizer halves the time spent estimating. The remodeler can estimate twice as many jobs.

**2** Remodelers average 4 to 5 bids to land one contract. Since the average job size is \$10,000, our remodeler does 225 bids a year to maintain volume. To increase gross by 50% he must now estimate 340 bids. This is easily accomplished with the digitizer and computer estimating system.

**3** The average profit margin for a remodeler is 4.5%. For a \$550,000 remodeler, the profit would be \$22,500. A 50% increase in gross gives him a further profit of \$11,250.

**4** The accuracy of a computer estimating system far outweighs manual estimating. A 1.75% average cost for errors in manual estimating is the norm. With a gross of \$750,000, manual estimates cost our estimator \$13,125 a year. This is more than the estimated profit figured above.

**5** How does an estimator without a computer system figure in discounts on materials? It can be difficult. The computer on the other hand, allows you to selectively change materials, labor or unit prices and see the bottom line results.

**6** Taking a "standard" mark-up for overhead can be very misleading to the final profit figure for a job. A computerized estimating system allows you to figure overhead costs based on percent of revenue, materials, labor & equipment hours. Improved overhead mark-up generates a savings of \$7,500.

**7** Your company's best profit mark-up is based on accurate measurements and costs, thereby affording you a higher probability of getting the job.

**Speed + Accuracy = More Jobs**

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### What is a Digitizer and How Does it Work?

**T**hough the technology of a digitizer may be complex, knowing what a digitizer is and how it works is easy to understand.

A digitizer consists of a hand-held stylus or cursor, a flat tablet and some sophisticated electronics. A precise grid of conductors is located inside the tablet. As the stylus or cursor is moved over the tablet surface, the digitizer's electronics determine its precise location and send coordinate data to the computer. Computerized estimating with a digitizer allows the estimator to quickly takeoff precise measurements from plans, drawings and blueprints which are then calculated by computer estimating software to create accurate, winning bids.

### Is it Expensive to Set Up a Computer Estimating System With a Digitizer?

**I**f you already have a computer, the costs are nominal. Carleton Coulter, a well known author on construction automation, wrote in Remodeling Magazine that "Most computer digitizer setups pay for themselves in a year."

With constant advances in computer price and performance, the initial cost of an estimating system becomes more and more affordable and the

pay back can be as short as your first computer estimated job.

## What Advantages Does a Digitizer Bring to an Estimating System?

**1** A digitizer is a faster and more accurate tool for doing takeoffs, especially when measuring areas or volumes. Just trace a shape or touch the end points of lines and let the computer create error-free calculations.

**2** Many estimating programs allow the user to run the complete system from a "menu" on the digitizer instead of using the computer keyboard. The menu consists of system commands printed in rows and columns on a sheet of paper or plastic which is placed on the tablet surface. Functions are performed by touching corresponding menu blocks with the stylus or cursor. A menu provides optimum takeoff productivity.

**3** A digitizer, in combination with on-screen graphics, can provide the estimator immediate verification of all takeoff input. Information taken directly from blueprints using a digitizer can be stored and changes made later with minimal effort.

**4** Today's modern technology and portable hardware allow the estimating system to be taken directly to the job site or plan room. Having the right tools on location increases productivity.

**5** A computerized estimating system with a digitizer will help enhance your professional image by providing a faster, more accurate and reliable method to estimate and bid on jobs.

**6** A computerized estimating system with a digitizer will help eliminate cost overruns and delays that often result from incorrect measurements, miscalculations and labor or material shortages. When using a computer estimating system, all items in a bid are accurately counted

with current labor and material costs factored in. Stored data can quickly and easily be updated to reflect changes in material or labor costs.

## What Type of System is Best for Cost Estimating?

Custom designed estimating systems clearly provide the best advantage. GTCO CalComp Peripherals Inc. has engineered its digitizers with features designed specifically for the cost estimator. Likewise, there are software companies that have developed specialized computer estimating software. Software is available for general contractors and specialty contractors including: roofing, drywall, earthwork, HVAC, highway/heavy, concrete, flooring, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and others. *Contact GTCO CalComp for a comprehensive list of compatible software.*

## THE GTCO ADVANTAGE

### Why Are GTCO CalComp Digitizers The Industry's Favorite Tablets for Cost Estimating?

**T**oday GTCO CalComp Peripherals is the leading supplier of estimating digitizers primarily because GTCO CalComp digitizers have been designed specifically for the cost estimator.

Estimators asked for digitizers that would fit any size plan or blueprint and GTCO CalComp responded with both the **Super L Series** and **Roll-Up Series**, which provide a wide range of active areas—from 20" x 24" up to 44" x 60". To make positioning of blueprints and drawings easier, the active area is delineated on each digitizer.

Estimators asked for a rigid, durable, yet lightweight tablet, so GTCO CalComp developed the **Super L Series**, which is available in sizes from 20" x 24" up to 44" x 60". Super L digitizers are the lightest weight rigid tablets available today—a 36" x 48" tablet weighs only 40 pounds, so it is easily supported by standard drafting tables and stands.

Estimators also asked for a portable tablet for easy transport to and from job sights. GTCO CalComp responded with its flexible **Roll-Up Series**, available in 3 popular sizes from 20" x 24" up to 36" x 48". Each weighs less than 3 pounds and features GTCO CalComp's exclusive Redundant Grid Technology™.

For estimators on a tight budget, GTCO CalComp developed the unique **QuikRuler** Measuring Workstation which incorporates either a Roll-Up Series or a Super L Series digitizer with LCD display and built-in measuring program. QuikRuler can be used alone or connected to a PC to input lengths, areas and counts into virtually any program, including spreadsheets.

## What Other Benefits do GTCO CalComp Digitizers Provide?

In addition to special features designed specifically for estimators, you will also benefit from the outstanding features listed below.

**1** All GTCO CalComp digitizers automatically perform diagnostic self-tests on power-up. If a fault is detected, a distinctive alarm is set off. This feature assures proper operation and alerts the user to possible problems that could cause measurement inaccuracies.

**2** All GTCO CalComp digitizers are designed to be used in both office and industrial environments. The electronic signals used in digitizing are so minute that they won't affect the data on floppy disks, yet the system is so sensitive that you can accurately digitize through a whole book of blueprints.

**3** GTCO CalComp's stylus and cursors are rugged. They have very reliable cables and switches and their systems generate no heat or noise.

**4** All GTCO CalComp digitizers are easy to use by virtue of each system's exclusive Super Set Menu™. This unique configuration feature allows the user to quickly set up or reconfigure the digitizer to work between estimating software and hundreds of other applications (such as CAD) simply by

selecting the menu blocks that correspond to the desired software package.

## How do I Know that GTCO CalComp Digitizers are Reliable?

**G**TCO CalComp digitizers have been used worldwide for many applications, under varying conditions and on virtually all types of computers. GTCO was awarded a patent for the world's first absolute-position electromagnetic digitizing technology over 25 years ago. The company has produced, installed and now supports more than 100,000 precision digitizer systems around the world, many used by estimators and contractors like yourself.

GTCO CalComp digitizers incorporate extensive built-in diagnostic tests which are automatically performed every time a digitizer is turned on. Each digitizer's controller diagnostics check: *On Board Memory, Tablet Operation, Tablet Cable, Tablet Drive Circuits, Signal Processing Circuits and Cursor or Stylus Operation*

Free technical support is provided for customers in the United States and Canada and GTCO CalComp's warranties and reliability statistics rate among the best in the industry.

# SUPER L SERIES™



## Super L Series

*Corded or Cordless Large Format Digitizers*

The lightest weight rigid tablets available today, Super L Series digitizers, are available in active area sizes of 20" x 24", 24" x 36", 36" x 48" and 44" x 60".



*Plan Holder*



*SuperSet Menu; Pointing Devices*

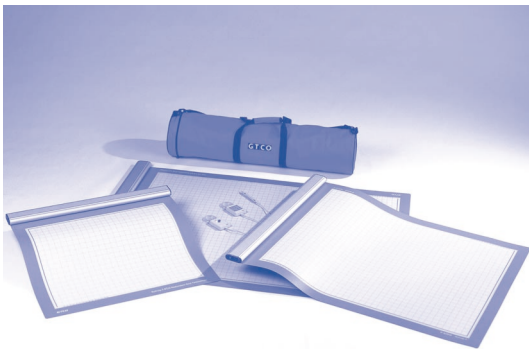
## Super L Series Accessories

**PLAN HOLDER** — Easily insert or remove single sheet plans, drawing sets and bound plan books of thickness up to one inch in one simple step.

**POINTING DEVICES** — System comes with your choice of Stylus or Four or Sixteen Button Corded or Cordless Cursor. Additional devices available as optional accessories.

**INKING INSERTS** — Added to the corded stylus, these inserts allow marking of blueprints as necessary.

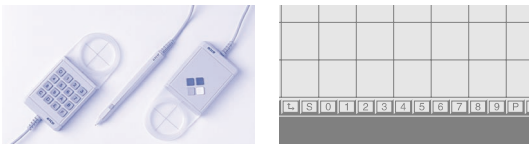
# ROLL-UP SERIES™



## Roll-Up Series

*Flexible, Rugged Digitizers for Cost Estimating*

**R**oll-Up Series tablets feature GTCO CalComp's exclusive Redundant Grid Technology™, which uses multiple signal paths to ensure continuous operation, even in tough construction environments. Roll-Up digitizers are available in active areas of 20" x 24", 30" x 36" and 36" x 48".



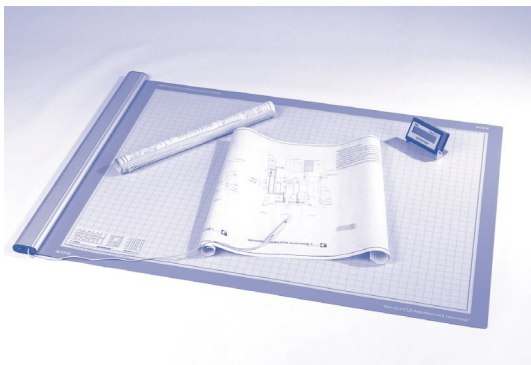
*Roll-Up Pointing Devices and SuperSet Menu*

## Roll-Up Series Accessories

**DELUXE TRAVEL BAG** — For easy transportation of the digitizer to and from job sites.

**POINTING DEVICES** — System comes with your choice of Stylus or Four or Sixteen Button Cursor. Additional devices available as optional accessories.

# QUIKRULER™



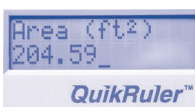
## QuikRuler Workstation

*The Affordable Measuring Workstation*

**Q**uikRuler automates blue-  
print takeoff and draw-



ing measurement processes. QuikRuler includes a Roll-Up Series digitizer, pointing device, measuring



menu and LCD display with built-in measuring program.

For applications requiring a rigid surface, QuikRuler is also available with Super L Series digitizers. QuikRuler is compatible with all leading estimating software so your investment is protected when you upgrade to the higher performance of a computerized estimating system.



*LCD Display,  
Measuring Menu &  
Pointing Device.*

## QuikRuler Accessories

**DELUXE TRAVEL BAG** — For easy transportation of the digitizer to and from job sites.

**POINTING DEVICES** — System comes with your choice of Stylus or Four or Sixteen Button Cursor. Additional devices available as optional accessories.

### What Type of Pointing Device is Best Suited for Estimating?

All GTCO CalComp digitizers are available with your choice of a Stylus or Four Button or Sixteen Button Cursor. Many estimators prefer the Stylus. Features on the Super L Series Stylus include a tip switch and two side buttons which can be programmed with commonly used functions such as 'Enter', 'Backspace', and 'Count' for easy access. Less time is spent returning to the computer keyboard or menu. An optional inking insert is also available to mark blueprints as needed. Most earthwork estimators prefer the cursor because its keypad enables the operator to input the depth of each entry.

### Investing in a Computer Estimating System

Purchasing a computer estimating system with a digitizer is a sound investment in your company's profitability and future. Our sales representatives will be happy to answer additional questions you may have and can provide a list of software vendors that have developed packages specifically for the estimating market.

**GTCO CalComp**  
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FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING

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VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT

[www.gtcocalcomp.com](http://www.gtcocalcomp.com)

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TO INQUIRE ABOUT PURCHASING A

COMPUTERIZED ESTIMATING SYSTEM

TO MEET YOUR BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS,

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR CLOSEST

RESELLER OR GTCO CALCOMP

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