

**White Paper:** *The Construction Industry  
Needs More Than Collaboration  
in Project Management*





## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, “collaborative” has become a buzzword used to describe project management styles and to depict a major project software capability. “Collaborative Project Management” is often heard in project conversations, in sales pitches, and in presentations at project management conferences and tradeshows. This phrase has spread throughout the halls of management as a key solution to failed project budget and schedule deliveries.

However, when embarking on a construction industry project, collaboration on its own is only a piece of the puzzle. Project management cannot succeed with collaboration alone; to achieve success in project management we need quantifiable and analytical methods to determine the status of our projects and programs. Creating expectations followed by executing and measuring results is an absolute necessity within the realm of project management– Without it, projects are sure to fail.

Section I of this white paper provides an overview of collaborative management. Section II discusses how collaboration should be incorporated into project management practices. Section III reviews collaborative trends that are taking place in the construction industry. Lastly, Section IV explores the role of collaborative technology in project management.

### ***I. COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT***

The term “collaborative management,” as coined in the 1990s, defines a process of working with stakeholders and resources to achieve a common goal through teamwork and progressive, sharing and caring leadership.

Collaborative management’s major achievements have been found in businesses that are repetitively using structured collaboration– where information and documentation can be created, stored and retrieved in a sustainable environment, where all the players hold relatively permanent positions in the organization.

Alternatively, unstructured collaboration; involves dealing with the unknowns and how to solve problems while increasing productivity which characterizes the world of project management.

Project management is a process of organization and managing resources that are necessary to complete a project. Collaboration is a part of that process, but project management is not only about organization or collaborating, it is a defined way of reaching the end goal.

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## II. COLLABORATION & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Projects are typically custom endeavors that bring a diverse group of people together with resources to meet a set of goals and objectives to create a product (the project). Afterwards, they often disband and move on to new, different projects.

There are unique, set challenges and rules specific to project management as we travel through the different phases of the project. There are estimates, budgets, schedules, standards, contracts, safety requirements, performance, and quality rules to abide by. In addition, we introduce new personalities to our organization within an unfamiliar environment. All of these project factors contribute to a future that appears nebulous with countless unknowns and challenges to address, measure, control and manage.

All these factors ensure that project management requires many techniques to measure success. There are techniques to:

1. Help quantify cost, time, productivity and efficiency
2. Manage information and documentation
3. Communicate with project team and stakeholders

With many technological innovations becoming available, we have a warehouse full of software solutions to assist the team in its approach and objectives. The key is making sure that there is an overarching project management strategy. One where collaboration is incorporated, clear expectations are set, and there is focus on producing quantifiable, measurable results.

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## III. COLLABORATIVE TRENDS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Technology is now playing a major role as we adopt new forms of measuring cost, time, documents, files, and data and information Tech is spearheading analytical achievements that help us to predict future events and avoid risks. Construction is a high-risk business that needs to embrace and implement evolved tools and techniques to achieve success and remain competitive today.



Companies that have embraced collaborative technology that is also capable of measuring results while holding organizations aligned with proven project methods and standards find greater successes. They are delivering their construction projects on time and within budget. They are finding risks and staying ahead of them before they become a major issue. These organizations are bridging the gaps of delayed information and data silos.

Gone are the days of hand written change orders piling up on someone's desk waiting for signature approval. Now, collaboration and technology come together so that a change order is submitted, designated personnel notified, comments can be made, and approval can be given at a click of a button.

According to a Deloitte study on collaboration within organizations, businesses with a collaborative strategy are twice as likely to outgrow their competitors; and are more likely to improve their profit. In another Deloitte study, it was found that the capital projects industry has historically under invested in technology

and has been resistant to change, but that is an opportunity to use technology to leverage delivery and the potential to achieve operational savings.

With increased collaboration on projects enabled by project management software that provides data-driven project planning and execution across the entire project lifecycle, construction organizations can:

1. Increase the speed of project delivery
2. Lower their risk profile and cost
3. Save up to 20 percent in asset maintenance cost reductions over the asset lifecycle

#### ***IV. ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE TECHNOLOGY IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT***

The use of project management technology like ARES PRISM has become an enabler in collecting, structuring and integrating information for more efficient delivery and operations in capital projects. ARES PRISM, with its full suite of quantifiable and analytical software tools, enhances the collaboration experience and brings project data to partners and stakeholders, mobile employees, contractors and third-party subcontractors, and internal employees. The software solution accomplishes this through the use of integrated project analytics, visualization tools and digital mobility.

Collaboration is a key component of project management and organizations must also make sure that they have the tools to quantifiably measure projects as they progress. Documentation and effective communication and management are the key features to a collaborative environment, but they do not ensure project success alone. Project software making information and project data available to project personnel quickly in real-time makes that difference.

Collaboration as a project software feature is viewed as the weaving of information, contribution, and communication in and through the project organization. Document control, communicating with stakeholders, teamwork, planning, awarding contracts, and staff interaction are important parts of project management. When coupled with a collaborative project tool that is capable of measuring results and project status, it completes the whole picture.

Furthermore, project management enhances and further aids collaboration by defining the documents needed for a success. Effective project management relies on the project being quantifiable. We must measure all the aspects inherent to a successful project.



#### **Project Questions Organizations Should Always Have Answers To:**

- How many hours of work are required to accomplish the task?
- How much material is needed?
- How much will it cost?
- Who will be needed to staff the project?
- What is the workflow?
- What is the schedule?
- What are the trends and productivity?
- How will productivity affect future trends?

A schedule is a key aspect highlighting where the project is broken down into manageable units of work and time. Progress must be measured and quantified; changes to scope need to be managed and itemized. All of these features are mandatory for a successful project; once defined and in unison with other stakeholders they become total project management. Project management software enables these capabilities while enhancing collaboration for project success.

## CONCLUSION

Today, the construction and capital projects industry's challenge is managing the incredible amount of project data and information available at its fingertips to help deliver successful projects.

While collaboration is a hot topic, we must remember that project management solutions should not be implemented based upon that capability alone. It must also provide the necessary quantifiable and analytical methods and standards projects require.

With the right project management software that incorporates collaboration and effectively collects, structures and integrates information, organizations are better equipped for delivering their capital projects successfully.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

With over 35 years of international project management, business investment and development experience, Robert specializes in coaching and supporting organizations. Pulling from extensive experience in the industrial and construction industry, Robert has a unique set of skills and brings a hands-on and roll-up-sleeves approach. He has worked closely with ARES PRISM to make sure that the key features in the software meet the increasing demands of the construction industry.

## ABOUT ARES PRISM:

ARES PRISM enterprise project controls software manages the complete project lifecycle delivering dependable forecasts, cost control, and performance measurement. As a scalable, robust and intuitive system, it harnesses industry best practices and integrates all aspects of the project, including cost and schedule, change management, estimating, earned value, contracts & procurement, and field progressing. Achieve superior project portfolio management with increased visibility and control, boosted accuracy and efficiency, and improved financial performance.



## RESOURCES:

Deloitte, Deloitte Access Economics; "The Collaborative Economy" (2014), pg. 6.

Deloitte, "Capital Projects in the Digital Age: The Capital Projects of the Future" (Dec. 2016).