

Collaboration in Construction

Introduction

Collaboration is a working practice, where individuals or teams are working together, with effective communication and shared knowledge. Positive collaboration is characterised by streamlined workflows, in which everyone knows their role, who, or where, to go to get the information they need, and feels safe fulfilling their duties and allowing others to finish theirs. As Henry Ford once said, “Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress and working together is success.”



Henry Ford

What is Collaboration in Construction?

Global Construction is growing at an unprecedented rate, with a further 35% growth predicted over the next decade¹. As construction projects require high volumes of information to be exchanged, collaboration should begin in the early planning stages, to set the tone for the project.



Collaboration in construction means individuals and teams working together towards one



common project goal. It is also very similar for the infrastructure industry. Successful collaboration will bring together the creative ideas of design professionals and blend those with the practicality of other team members. It involves building strong relationships with all team members, based on trust and respect, to work together and complete the project efficiently.

Project complexity has grown over time, which often means larger team sizes, as well as the co-ordination and integration of a great deal of complex information, processes and systems, leading to a greater need to establish collaboration and formal channels of communication.

Benefits to Collaboration

Building Relationships

Construction is a fragmented industry. Projects typically involve numerous specialists: architects, engineers, surveyors, consultants and general contractors, who each work on various stages of the project. These relationships, if not nurtured carefully, may negatively

¹ Construction Global ‘Global Construction to grow 35% in the next 10 years’ [online]. 28/2/2022. <https://constructionglobal.com/built-environment/global-construction-grow-35-next-10-years>

impact project success, leading to under-performance, waste, increased expenses and innovative approaches being ignored.

As an example, any problems arising in the construction stage may need an architect to amend a plan. Usually, the construction team would have to contact the project manager who would then contact the architect(s). There would be delays waiting for responses and next steps. The deeper the existing relationships and the greater the degree of automation, the more likely discussions and solutions will be arrived at more quickly.

The traditional delivery method of Design-Bid-Build outlines how to work on individual segments of the job but does not showcase how it all joins together. This is due to information generally being gathered on an 'as needed' basis, and not shared, which stifles collaboration and presents team members diverse and frequently limited perspectives that may lead to adversarial solutions.

Collaboration allows for greater team-wide knowledge-sharing. It provides a wider view of the project, which should provide numerous benefits. A well-integrated team is likely to lead to better project performance and reduce risks for all involved. It increases the likelihood that the team will process diverse ideas from each domain expert, allocate risks to the parties best equipped to deal with them, and adapt to changes more quickly.

Collaboration can enhance many team-based skills, such as: motivation, engagement, reciprocity, attentiveness and involvement. Construction projects can last for years, and if a team works well together, they may choose to work together again in the future. This means the relationships being built during projects, should be shaped with a long-term mentality.



Time Constraints

Time constraints are a major concern within construction and may contribute to defective designs, high rates of accidents, and loss in revenue. Effective communication, between all team members, may result in more efficient time management, through scheduling and task prioritisation.

Effective Communication

Collaboration can ensure the flow of important information is not disrupted, creating a unified project team, with a greater understanding of project requirements, which can in turn lead to a greater capacity for tackling uncertainty. Teams that communicate easily and solve problems efficiently should have a competitive advantage over those who do not.

Keeping Up With Regulations

Clear and open communication will also facilitate compliance training, monitoring and management and ensure each team stays up-to-date with regulatory changes.

How Software Facilitates Collaboration

Sharing Knowledge and Information Real-Time

Software facilitates communication and knowledge-sharing within the entire project team: in-house staff and third-parties. Data (project goals, tasks, drawings and technical specifications, RFIs, Files, feedback) is stored and shared real-time and can be accessed from an office, construction site or home-working. Users log in and instantly access all relevant data, which reduces the back and forth exchange of documents. Once a document is updated everyone sees the latest version instantly – which reduces the risk of some people working on older copies. One single, integrated source of truth provides an unobstructed information flow leading to informed decision-making and more productive conversations. It reduces delays by allowing any changes to be reviewed, approved, negotiated, and initiated more quickly, and well-designed systems, will include multiple filters, so that all relevant data can be retrieved quickly and easily.

Making informed decisions based on real-time data and communication between Office Professionals and the construction site, can significantly improve the construction process, help predict new trends, foresee costly mistakes, tackle project delays, provide feedback for future strategy and set up long-term success.

Full ERP systems, such as Adaptive, will combine project management, supply chain, inventory management, CMMS (maintenance and asset management) through to financials (accounting, forecasting operating budgets, invoicing), client management, CRM, messaging, surveys and Human Resource Management.



A Voice for Everyone

Project Management is necessarily well-structured. The downside is it does not naturally allow for brainstorming and idea sharing. Adaptive's Project Management software handles this through its Project Ideas and Knowledge Sharing modules, which enable all team members to share ideas in an internal social media type forum.

Conclusion

Collaboration via integrated software allows everyone to see the whole picture and is an essential component for successful construction projects. It removes duplication of effort and provides a single place for everyone to access the latest files and reports, see outstanding tasks and have a high level view of overall progress. Any over-runs of budget or time will be instantly visible, which increases the likelihood of successful resolutions.

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Adaptive

Adaptive (<https://adaptive.idcheck.tech>) provides an all-in-one, cloud-based, customizable ERP (Business Process Automation) solution for multiple industries, with multiple fraud risk mitigation controls. Pick only the modules you require. The platform is quick and easy to use. We handle all set-up and import your existing data.

Industry Coverage ranges from Construction, Commercial and Residential Property Management, through to Manufacturing, Healthcare, Professional Services and Retail.

Functionality ranges from Material Resource Planning, Supply Chain and Inventory Management, Project Management (with third party File Sharing & RFIs), Production, Quality Control, CMMS (Asset Management and Maintenance), Packaging, Order Management, Invoicing, Accounting, Payments, Messaging, CRM, E-Signing and HRM.

Contact Us to discuss your use case: info@adaptive.idcheck.tech