

You Can Increase Contract Team Efficiency & Deliver Real Savings on Your Project!

Experience shows that when you enable your contract team to increase their efficiency you begin to experience considerable savings in cost and time.

In this article (the 2nd in a series highlighting the compelling benefits that you'll enjoy when you apply certain workplace management solutions) you will discover how people, like you, in the construction industry, are saving time and money – as a result of being more effective – right now.

How? By using proven tools and methods to effectively overcome the challenges that come with subcontractors.

Were you aware of the shift in the dynamics of construction projects in recent years? Perhaps you already understand that most main contractors, instead of undertaking to do most of the work themselves, have become more like managing contractors – something akin to project management companies.

Think about it: Is it not unusual for a main contractor to have 5 to 10 salaried employees on site overseeing multiple contractors with 500+ operatives? Of course, this approach provides benefits to main contractors, including:

- You don't have to deal with industrial relations issues.
- You don't have to deal with own labour variables by paying the subcontractor a fixed price for work.
- You can deliver quality as a result of using skilled specialists (e.g., groundworks, mainframe, mechanical and electrical).

Unfortunately, this approach also brings the main contractor challenges, including:

- Managing subcontractor attendance on site.
- Managing subcontractor health & safety.
- Managing and sharing project documentation.
- Dealing with subcontractor "claims" for additional payment due to unforeseen project issues.

You may be wondering how you can overcome these challenges or deal with them more effectively. And that's a good thing to wonder... and to wonder what is important about that... what difference will it make when you do overcome these challenges and deal with them more effectively? How valuable would that difference be to you?

You'll be happy to know that recent technology gives you what you need to overcome and effectively deal with each of the challenges listed above. I wonder if you can imagine how much more you can focus on the project at hand (and not on managing endless folders of raw data) once you have put the right technology to work for you. If this appeals to you, you'll want to know about the two key technological developments as well as the solutions they offer.

Two Key Technological Developments:

- 1) Broadband Availability – Over the years as broadband coverage has grown and continues to grow significantly, so has your ability to have internet (datacards, wireless and satellite broadband) access on site.
- 2) Internet as a Shared Network – Not only can the internet be used in the same way as a traditional internal network drive, it also has the ability to be used by multiple organisations in uploading and sharing and viewing data in a secure environment. (And any part of it you want to be protected can be easily with a password.)

Solutions Available to You Now:

- 1) Managing Subcontractor Attendance - Solutions include, swipe/proximity cards, key fobs, finger, palm and facial biometrics. Biometrics improves the integrity of attendance information on site by eliminating "buddy punching". You can also take advantage of mobile enabled biometric solutions

which operate free from telephone lines or broadband. On site from day one these “plug-n-play” options provide you with a robust solution. Couple this with advancements in web-based technology and it's possible to view attendance by operatives / by organisation / by site in real time from any internet-accessible location. This transparent view of hours worked by subcontractor organisation gives you more accurate information (re: contractor claims, future project pricing, etc.) as well as a live register of who is on site in the event of an evacuation.

2) Managing Subcontractor Health & Safety – If you're a managing contractor then you already know that one of your biggest challenges is accurately tracking subcontractor Health & Safety documentation across multiple sites! The type of information that needs to be tracked includes:

- Company Health & Safety statement
- Employers Liability Insurance
- Public Liability Insurance
- Site specific risk assessments
- Site specific method statements
- Operative skills (e.g. CSCS cards)

Web-based technology allows subcontractors to upload required documentation remotely into a project through username/password access. The main contractor can easily track subcontractor organisations and retrieve any outstanding information.

2) Managing Subcontractor Project Documentation - The contract team can share documentation securely online. Features such as version control, controlled access by organisation etc., ensure that information can be shared easily among all selected organisations meaning that the most accurate information is viewable at all times. By taking the decision to set up a system (see #1 above) you get an accurate point of reference to support claims for additional payments, stage payments or resources disputes across sites.

If you read the last article, you'll already have a good idea of just how much time and money you can save by choosing to increase your efficiency. Why is that? Because this puts control of the project firmly back in the hands of the main contractor – back in your hands where it belongs – improving your effectiveness, overall efficiency, allowing more time to be spent on valuable activities rather than administration-based activity.

What would you do with extra time? Extra money? Less stress and hassle?

Now that you are aware that ~

- subcontractors can be managed more efficiently and accurately
- the technology is available to you
- the technology is proven in the construction sector

With increasing competition pushing down pricing, when now would be a good time to... increase project and contract team efficiency... deliver excellent projects with time savings... increase your profitability...

Thank you for taking the time to read this article. In future articles we will deal with subjects concerning time leakage, health & safety, traceability, budgeting and cost management.

About the Author

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