Optimize Workflows to Reduce Inefficiencies and Improve Business Operations

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Recent events have shined a bright light on construction companies and how they do business. From preconstruction to close-out, a lot of companies are taking a step back to see how they can improve—not just in the extraordinary circumstances of the past year but moving forward into the new normal.

Efficient and Responsive Workflows Have Become Even More Critically Important

First and foremost, what is a construction workf ow?

Workf ows are abundant in the construction industry and vary depending on what the company does specif cally. But, in a nutshell, workf ows are the coordination of tasks between people in an organization. They include the passing of data and information, and the action that is required based on that data. They also usually follow a hierarchy of approvals and privileges based on job description. But the goal is that they are optimized to maximize prof ts in the organization. Examples could include the accounts payable process, payroll processing, the submittal process, RFIs, and close-out.

As simple as those sound, a lot of companies have found a lot of ways to improve on these processes. When looking closely, there are usually a lot of ineff ciencies, redundancies, and opportunities to improve the quality of work. All of these can

lead to completing work in a timelier manner, using fewer resources and resulting in happier customers—and ultimately more prof t.

Where Are the Problems?

While every business is different, the workf ow problems are usually very similar. In fact, they almost always fall into one of three areas.

» As mentioned above, one of the main parts of a construction workf ow is the passing of data and information. Without a smooth and eff cient means of data

transmission and communication, whether in the field or back office, workflow will not be optimized.

» If data is not in a centralized, accessible location, silos are created in the business and workflows become redundant. Not only is this inefficient, but it can lead to missing, incomplete, or incorrect information being communicated through the workflow.

» When workflows are "enclosed," it is difficult for employees to keep track of where they are in the process. To ensure that the team is on the same page, they need transparency in the workflow and the progression of events.

Stop for a moment and think about a company's many workflows. Are there places where there are breakdowns in any of these areas? The good news is that these breakdowns can be fixed.

How Can These Workflows Be Fixed?

To succeed in correcting workflow issues, focus on CASE: collaborate, automate, standardize, and eliminate.

COLLABORATE

Most employees are good at what they do and are critical thinkers when it comes to solving problems and completing tasks.

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About the Author

Tarry Schabel is in Aktion's Maumee, Ohio, office where he leads a national sales team focused on helping construction companies modernize their operations by implementing next-gen software for the construction industry, including   Oim