

## Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Newspaper Streamlines Project Management; Achieves Compliance, Increases Efficiency

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Journal) is the primary newspaper in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Journal employs 900 people and is distributed widely throughout Wisconsin. The company decentralizes project management by organizing functional departments to reflect different competencies. This structure makes it difficult for the Project Management Office (PMO) to gain visibility into projects comp anywide. To rectify this, the PMO implemented the Microsoft® Office Enterprise Project Management (EPM) Solution and received an immediate return on investment. The EPM Solution has streamlined total work management, provided visibility and accountability, increased employee efficiency and involvement, simplified reporting compliance, and helped the Journal increase its competitive edge in the news reporting industry.

### Situation

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Journal), the largest newspaper in Wisconsin, offers both paper and online issues. Based in Milwaukee, the company employs 900 people and has a daily circulation of 217,000 and a Sunday circulation of 384,000. It is organized functionally, with groups divided according to expertise such as IT, newsgathering, finance, and advertising.

"The Microsoft Office EPM Solution has paid for itself many times over in less than a year. Its flexibility gave us the ability to fit the solution within our organization and receive immediate benefits. "

Jeffrey Roe  
Manager, IT PMO  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

The company's two-person Project Management Office (PMO) team is responsible for project management guidance throughout the company and is part of the 40 -person IT department. Project management is decentralized, with many individuals outside the PMO acting as project managers in addition to their core jobs. "Before a more structured idea of project management was put in place, it was very disjointed," says Jeffrey Roe, Manager of the IT PMO for the Journal. "The success of a project was dictated by who exactly was running it—it could be political, or might just be because of the expertise of that particular person. It was hit or miss."

The Journal generally runs 12 to 15 projects concurrently, with budgets that range from U.S.\$5,000 to \$2 million. The company used Microsoft® Office Excel® 2003 spreadsheet software to track projects. "We would print a chart and that was our project plan in total. Each department had its own documents that were never collected, assembled, or saved," says Roe. "We got everybody updated information by having a lot of meetings, but there were problems in communicating and the most current information was not being communicated through the various e-mail messages."

The Journal did not require a large and complicated project management system. The company needed a simple solution that would help it manage the total workflow. The solution would also need to help the company run projects consistently across departments with a high level of visibility and accountability. In addition, The Journal wanted to enhance employee efficiency, increase the overall accuracy of information, find easier ways to meet required reporting compliance, and improve its competitive edge in the news reporting industry.

### Solution

In November 2006, the PMO evaluated various project management options including Clarity and externally hosted services. It determined that the Microsoft Office Enterprise Project Management (EPM) Solution was the best fit for the company. "We chose the EPM Solution because of the very tight integration it has with other Microsoft products, its cost-effectiveness under our Enterprise Agreement, and because our employees have experience with Microsoft technology, which shortened the learning curve and increased acceptance," says Roe.

In January 2007, the PMO deployed the EPM Solution by installing Microsoft Office Project Server 2007 and Microsoft Office Project Professional 2007. The solution went live on May 1, 2007. "We looked at the project schedule and for our size of an organization and what we needed, we felt comfortable performing the EPM

Solution install and configuration ourselves. We did require some assistance to answer certain questions, but by and large, it was running by the time our technical contacts at Microsoft evaluated it," says Roe. With Office Project Server 2007, project managers have a set of tools to effectively manage projects of any size, including the correct allocation of people, money, and materials. Office Project Server 2007 works with the Office Project Professional 2007 and Microsoft Office Project Web Access clients.

The PMO provided brief training sessions for users. "Our employee training was fast because we focused on what we needed," says Roe. "We didn't make them absorb all the elements initially. We focused on the Web sites that the solution creates, as well as the timesheets. Then, over time, we have added pieces as we have added more complex projects to the solution." This practical approach demonstrates the PMO's deployment of the EPM Solution overall. "Our mode of deployment was streamlined. We focused on exactly what the company needed to run projects better and made use of the EPM Solution with that goal in mind," says Roe.

"We looked at the project schedule and for our size of an organization and what we needed, we felt comfortable performing the EPM Solution install and configuration ourselves. "

Jeffrey Roe  
Manager, IT PMO  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

The company now has more than 60 employees using the EPM Solution, and it relies heavily on Office Project Web Access. The PMO expects the number of users to rise as new projects require input from greater numbers of employees. The Journal also has a Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007 environment that is integrated tightly with the EPM Solution.

#### Benefits

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel was able to deploy the Microsoft Office Enterprise Project Management Solution quickly and cost-effectively, and it received immediate benefits. The EPM Solution has streamlined companywide project management, increased employee efficiency, cut reporting compliance time, and helped the Journal increase its competitive edge in the news reporting industry.

#### Streamlines Total Work Management

The EPM Solution helps the Journal guide the overall direction of its workflow and increase efficiency. "The EPM Solution captures a lot of metrics. We can now see exactly what tasks people spend time on and answer the big questions such as: are they spending the right amount of time on this project, does it provide a large benefit, and does it make sense?" Roe says.

On a more detailed level, the out-of-the-box features of the EPM Solution streamline the company's workflow and make it easier for individuals to gain access to and contribute to projects quickly. "We use the data analysis cube to track projects and staff timesheets. We really like the way that data exported from the cube into Office Excel maintains its link back to the Office Project Server 2007 cube—even when the spreadsheet is sent in an e-mail message to other people," says Roe.

Before the Journal deployed the EPM Solution, projects were decentralized and accurate information was hard to find. The EPM Solution provides the structure to create, track, manage, and derive valuable data companywide. "The EPM Solution gives great visibility on requested projects. We know immediately what people want, which resources are required, and the forecasted timeline. And then we can track it from start to finish," says Roe.

The EPM Solution has helped the Journal connect all project information so it can better define new goals. "Part of the EPM Solution benefit is being able to better understand yourself as a department and a company. How we talk about ourselves has changed; we now classify activities correctly, which results in better control of workflow," notes Roe.

#### Provides Cost-Effective Project Management

The IT staff members were able to install the EPM Solution by themselves and get what they needed to achieve the next level of maturity in project management. "If project management maturity is measured on a scale of 1 to 5, we're at about a 2.5, leaning toward a 3.0. We probably will never get to a 4, just because of the type of company we are, but the EPM Solution gives us what we need," says Roe. "At a glance, we know exactly what the company is working on, how much time is being expended, and the overall benefit of the projects." The deployment focus employed by the Journal was scaled appropriately to provide the PMO with tangible results. "The Microsoft Office EPM Solution has paid for itself many times over in less than a year. Its flexibility gave us the ability to fit the solution within our organization and receive immediate benefits," says Roe.

"With the EPM Solution timesheets and corresponding visibility, we were able to bring employee time spent on administrative tasks down by 10 percent from last year."

Jeffrey Roe  
Manager, IT PMO  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

A significant benefit of the EPM Solution is that it does not require a large time commitment from the PMO. "We're really only spending four to six hours a month managing the EPM Solution. Once it is configured and up and running, managing the project center is extremely straightforward," says Roe.

#### Increases Employee Efficiency

Under the old system, the company couldn't tell exactly how its employees spent their time. With the timesheet functionality in the EPM Solution, this information is readily available. "A lot of eyes were opened when we started tracking the time of the IT staff. We were spending too much time on what we call administrative tasks—not work that is for projects or maintenance support," says Roe. "With the EPM Solution timesheets and corresponding visibility, we were able to bring employee time spent on administrative tasks down by 10 percent from last year."

Additionally, the visibility provided by the EPM Solution has increased employee productivity. "Time spent now is tangible. The EPM Solution gives us tremendous visibility, and visible people work better. Employees are inclined to complete projects faster because their name is publicly associated with it," says Roe. The EPM Solution also increases productivity by making it easier for employees to contribute. "In our company, everyone who is working on a project also has his or her 'regular jobs' to do. Making the project management process fit within that reality by using the EPM Solution makes it easier for people to find what they are looking for, contribute, and move on," says Roe.

The EPM Solution also helps the project managers save time because they can access, post, and review projects easily and trust the information they see, without time-consuming follow-up. "The visibility and ability to rely upon information provided by the Microsoft Office EPM Solution has saved a whole bunch of time. We no longer have to guess where the document is or whether it is current," says Roe.

#### Cuts Reporting Compliance Time

The Journal must meet required reporting periods, particularly the ones mandated by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. The EPM Solution has increased reporting accuracy and reduced the time needed to compile the reports. "Before the EPM Solution, it was a big challenge to provide all of the documentation required by our internal and external auditors. Now we have it all in front of us. If an auditor wants to see information about a particular project, we have instant access to all of the files," says Roe. This functionality simplifies and speeds up reporting, which frees employee time for other tasks. "We submit required quarterly reports on our IT controls. Last year, the review process took three months. With the EPM Solution, we did it in three weeks and increased the accuracy of the reports," says Roe.

#### Helps Increase Competitive Edge

The Journal continually looks for ways to improve its organization and remain a news leader in Milwaukee. "The newspaper industry is a competitive area, and the EPM Solution has given us the tools to be more efficient and stay competitive," says Roe. "We can finish projects more quickly, account for our time, and provide more support to the organization as a whole."