Coping with change

How to ensure service delivery remains in synch with evolving customer demands

Once upon a time, there was a project. It began when it was supposed to, everything happened to schedule and the client didn't ask for a single change during delivery. The project was delivered on time, and they all lived happily ever after.

Yes, it's a fairy tale.

In reality, just as frogs don't turn into princes, professional services projects never run that smoothly. Things happen: external events change client priorities; tasks overrun; a key member of the project team gets sick.

The true test of your mettle is how you deal with these obstacles, so that your service delivery remains in synch with customer demands – no matter which has evolved or why. Can you spot a delay or issue before it escalates? What contingencies, in terms of budget, time and access to skilled resource, have you built in? How able is the business as a whole to respond?

> "*The top pressure [faced by project managers] is customers frequently changing their minds mid-project (41%). Professional services project managers can end up wasting time and, most importantly, scarce resources to meet vacillating customer demands.*"
>
> *Aberdeen Group – Project Management in Professional Services*

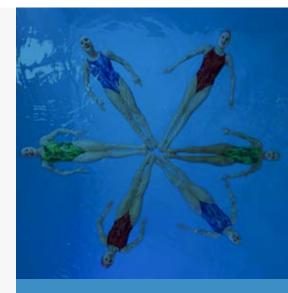# Multiple projects, multiple problems

This latter factor is key. If you only had a couple of projects, a problem in one could be easily absorbed and resources re-channelled so the overall impact on the business and the clients would be minimal. But when you've got multiple projects, in multiple locations, that simply isn't possible. Issues in your service delivery affect not only your project and customer, but your colleagues' projects too.

Take a simple example: a consultant is caught up on location, and has to stay on for a week. The knock-on effect is immediate: not only is the current project running late, but so is his next one. And, unless the problem is recognized, other members of both project teams may be twiddling their thumbs, waiting for a stage to be completed. Employees are frustrated, the business margin is hit and even your customer – content today that their immediate issue is solved – will be wondering next week why a key milestone has been missed.

The best, and the rest

Some see these issues as a pure occupational hazard. But as a recent Aberdeen Group report[1] demonstrated, there is now a growing divide in professional services between the best-in-class and the rest. The best prepare for and protect against the inevitable change: the rest don't.

What that means in practice is that the best-in-class ensure their project managers have comprehensive visibility of exactly what's going on in a project, in real time. They can track milestones and schedule status, resource availability and project costs. They build risk assessment and monitoring into project design, with regular reviews. And as a result, they complete 89% of projects on time or early, and 94% within budget – compared to an industry average of 77% on schedule and 86% on budget.

At a glance

- Change is inevitable – so best practice means preparing for it
- Project managers need visibility of exactly what's going on, in real-time
- Tools like KeyedIn™ Projects can provide that visibility...
- ...and help assess the impact of proposed changes
- So you can keep service delivery aligned with customer expectations

[1] N Castellina, N Ismail & P Krensky, Aberdeen Group – Project Management in Professional Services: Managing People for Profits (July 2012)

Ideas in action: Re-assigning resources to accelerate delivery

Ibsecad, a specialist in CAD co-ordination for the construction industry, uses KeyedIn™ Projects to help it make best use of its skilled CAD design team spread over four continents.

From 3D modelling to installation drawings to virtual flythroughs, the construction industry relies on accurate visualization of proposed projects to facilitate client decision-making, spot potential issues before building starts and support facilities management. Ibsecad's team of 65 designers across Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia provides those visualizations, working as a global team to produce output faster than the competition.

The design team are allocated assignments via their own user dashboard which sets out their week ahead. But when a project is delayed or a client requests changes creating extra (urgent) work, Ibsecad needs to be able to re-assign resource to meet client demands, without affecting overall delivery.

With KeyedIn Projects, it can do this in a matter of clicks. Firstly, KeyedIn Projects helps Ibsecad build more accurate and comprehensive project plans. Then, when those plans change, KeyedIn Projects updates all associated assignments instantly. That means project managers can see exactly what the impact is on their overall delivery, and designers get instant notification of changes in their workload.

In the past, Ibsecad used spreadsheets to control this process. But this was time-consuming – a single change could require several different files to be updated – and high-risk: managers could be working with out-of-date information.

Now, thanks to KeyedIn Projects, Ibsecad can be more agile and responsive, reallocating resource in real-time and intelligently, based on skills and availability.

Solution benefits:

- KeyedIn Projects went live in just a few weeks, with minimal training, delivering instant ROI

- Any time anywhere system access

- Ability to assign and re-assign resources based on real-time availability and capability information

- Extensive efficiencies achieved in operations management.

Everyone complimented on the fact that the software is very user friendly and after just one hour of training, each person was able to start using it. Project Managers were especially happy with the Planning function.

Product focus: Four ways KeyedIn™ Projects helps you manage change

KeyedIn Projects is a fully integrated suite of business applications designed to support professional services organizations at every stage of project and program management. Delivered via SaaS, it gives managers the control they need of their own projects, and of the wider project portfolio, and simplifies everyday admin for project teams.

> " Best-in-class organizations are over twice as likely as all others to have access to project management software through Software as a Service. "
>
> *Aberdeen Group – Project Management in Professional Services*

Task Based Planning

Project Status Reporting

Resource Diary Scheduling

Time & Expense Tracking

Service Delivery Framework

Risk Tracking & Mitigation

Document Management

Issue Tracking & Resolution

Collaboration

KeyedIn Projects helps you to:

1. **Prepare for change, with improved project scoping and planning**
    KeyedIn Projects offers an intuitive project planning tool that enables you to build, review and amend initial plans collaboratively and in the context of other projects already operating within your organization. It includes features such as interactive Gantt charts, easy-to-use task creator, visualization for critical paths and a range of templates to help increase consistency in planning. Crucially, it also links to resource and skill databases, so you can make realistic decisions about when key people will be available. The result: your initial plans are more comprehensive and accurate.

2. **Spot potential issues with comprehensive visibility of every detail**

   Once a project has started, KeyedIn™ Projects ensures you can see exactly what's happening at micro level: who is working on what tasks, where, and when they'll be finished. That means that as soon as there is the slightest delay, you're aware – and can take action as required: applying contingencies, informing colleagues or clients, reallocating resources if necessary.

3. **Assess the impact of change and manage customer expectations**

   When clients request additional tasks or scope changes, KeyedIn Projects helps you to quickly establish what the impact would be on costs and timelines of your project – and what the wider business impact would be. For example, if the request would mean taking resource from a different project, how feasible is that, and is the business willing to adjust? You can also draw on a shared database of previous projects and documentation to see how similar changes were managed in the past. That means you can make a more informed decision about whether or not to facilitate the change – and give your client an accurate estimate for the additional work. Delivery and demand, synchronized once more.
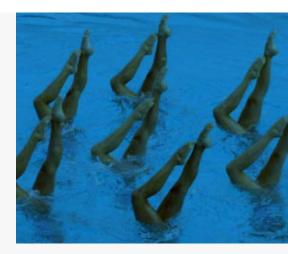
4. **Keep your team connected**

   When changes do occur, with KeyedIn Projects you can keep everybody connected, collaborative features ensure the latest feedback, issues or change requests are distributed to all team members across the business in real time. There's no risk of people working with out-of-date schedules or scoping documents, and management reporting is far simpler.

Discover how

Time to improve the way you manage project change? Talk to KeyedIn today: because of our SaaS delivery model, you could be up and running with KeyedIn Projects in just 2 weeks. Contact us on 888-960-5472 to find out more.

Put us to the test: visit www.keyedinpso.com to sign up for a free, no-obligation 15-day trial.

About KeyedIn™ Solutions

KeyedIn is an agile Cloud-based software company focused on delivering powerful results in critical areas like project management and custom manufacturing to specialized vertical markets. Solutions include project portfolio management (PPM), professional services automation (PSA) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems that are offered in several editions to support the needs of both small-medium size businesses and large multi-national corporations. And KeyedIn Flex, the company's rapid application development platform, allows custom applications to be developed faster and more affordably than ever before.

With the needs of today's businesses in mind, KeyedIn offers a true SaaS model for a more flexible, scalable and affordable means to solve complex problems and deliver business results faster.

Keep up with us at **www.keyedin.com**

KEYEDIN™
PROJECTS

Driving Business Performance
with Cloud Solutions

Part of the KeyedIn Solutions Business Portfolio

www.keyedin.com

Corporate Headquarters

5001 American Blvd West
Suite 1010
Minneapolis, MN 55437, USA
p +1 866 662 6820

EMEA Headquarters

Maple House
Woodland Park
West Yorkshire, BD19 6BW, UK
p +44 (0)1274 863300

KIPR_AE_BR_IIASD_0313