


# Continuous collaboration

How a platform for knowledge sharing throughout a project nurtures innovation





When Archimedes leapt from his Syracuse bathtub, he unwittingly did a major disservice to the entire future of innovation. It was the foundation for the myth of the “Eureka” moment – a single flash of inspiration that comes out of the blue.

Experience, of course, tells us otherwise: while no-one doubts the value of inspiration, the reality is that the majority of ideas and innovations are the outcome of protracted wrestling with a problem – whether in scientific discovery or professional service delivery.

---

“Applying social networking and collaboration features and functions in a PPM context within an execution-side PPM deployment can aid or accelerate daily end-user adoption of the PPM system, because it can curb the tendencies of project team members to go outside the PPM system.”

Gartner  
Magic Quadrant for Cloud-Based  
Project and Portfolio Management  
Services (2012)

---



**Problems are typically solved through hard graft and a systematic approach: building on layers of existing knowledge, reviewing expert literature and past projects, casting aside a host of initial suggestions and in some cases running extensive scenario modelling to test different options.**

Put another way, solutions are based on cumulative knowledge and collaboration. These are the essential foundations, the preconditions, for targeted innovation – particularly in a world where, no matter how much we claim that every project is unique, the overwhelming majority of issues have been encountered before.

Deep down, professional services project managers are well aware of this. It's why you do your best to impose standard processes, ensure regular reviews and encourage the team to share ideas. But on your own, there's only so much you can achieve. If knowledge is only exchanged via you, then the potential value of collaboration is minimised.

### **A systematic approach to knowledge sharing**

What organizations need, therefore, is that systematic approach to knowledge sharing – one that ensures every member of the project team has access to all the information they need at any one time, ideally via a shared workspace. That doesn't just mean the details of their specific task, but also other project background, such as overall plans and budgets, which form the parameters in which innovation can take place.

For example, by looking at the overall schedule, team members can see whether there is any room for manoeuvre to introduce a more complex solution at a particular phase; on reviewing the full plan, you can evaluate whether your extra work would be constructive.

Crucially, this core project information must be up-to-date. When you can see recent reports showing that the project is already running over-budget, you are less likely to consider risky solutions and spend time developing a new approach if an existing one will suffice.

### **Practical collaboration**

This is collaboration in the most practical sense, working together as a project team towards the overall outcome for the business, that reflects the realities of project delivery. It doesn't restrict innovation, but rather focuses it, inviting and enabling the team to apply themselves to find workable and usable solutions to issues and change requests.



## At a glance

- Innovation in professional services projects is essential
- But it needs to take place within practical parameters
- That means giving the whole project team access to the core project information
- They can then use this as the context for developing innovative solutions
- Or for applying knowledge from previous projects effectively
- This results in more effective service delivery.



Once those solutions are found, of course, the project itself evolves. The shared workspace, where all the documentation and conversations are stored – and core documents such as project plans are updated – then has a new function: ensuring those working on subsequent phases are aware of what has changed, so that they can build on it.

Take, for instance, a process re-engineering project where the project team has upgraded an IT system to streamline particular tasks. Knowing this, the team working on the next stage – the user experience, can make use of the more advanced system to realise further benefits.

How do they know this? Because in a previous project, they've done something very similar. And it's here that smart organizations can make even better use of their existing corporate knowledge. By reviewing previous projects – again all stored in an archived workspace – the team can not only repeat a solution design that is proven to work but also alert themselves to potential issues and pitfalls. In a business where knowledge is integral to the services you sell, this is the perfect embodiment of how that knowledge can be used more effectively, with minimal effort or additional demands on the time of busy professionals.

---

“ *Effective collaboration requires discipline to evolve. We need to know who is working on what, what roles need to be filled, and who is responsible for what.* ”

Thomas Juli  
*The Good and Evil of Collaboration Tools (2011)*

---

### **Applying the evidence**

Reusing the knowledge the business has built up over time doesn't just help avoid problems in delivery: it can also be applied to tasks such as project selection and costing. Instead of semi-educated guesswork, by looking at previous projects you can estimate on evidence: how long it took and how much resource was involved. And knowing that, do you still want to take the project on?

This kind of collaborative working, making better use of existing knowledge throughout the project lifecycle, is essential to any business that wants to be a “learning organization”. It means you don't repeat your mistakes, and avoid duplication of effort. What's more, it provides the firmest of foundations for more innovative solutions.



## Product focus: Five ways KeyedIn™ Projects helps you manage knowledge for continuous collaboration

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 provides a means of centralizing project and organizational knowledge to enable greater collaboration throughout the project lifecycle.

KeyedIn Projects empowers you to:

### 1. Keep all project communications and documents in one place

A core feature of KeyedIn Projects is the central project workspace where all documents and communications can be stored for ready reference by any member of the team. Comprehensive document management capabilities ensure version control, while the communication history means that vital information doesn't get lost in mailboxes.

### 2. Ensure the entire team are kept up to date with project status

Enhance collaboration by making sure every member of the team understands the project status, and is singing from the same hymn sheet. KeyedIn Projects makes it simple to update every aspect of project plans when a particular workstream changes, not only creating a sense of working together but actively supporting individual team members to manage their workload.

### 3. Easily draw on previous experience for project planning and service delivery

Search the KeyedIn Projects archive to find the information you need to estimate and plan accurately or to draw on successful solutions from previous projects. Organizational knowledge is no longer locked in the minds of the experts.

---

“ Collaboration is the juice of teamwork; it is what makes teamwork possible in the first place. ”

Thomas Juli  
The Good and Evil of  
Collaboration Tools (2011)

---



#### 4. Share knowledge as it is generated – and instil a learning culture

With the central project workspace in KeyedIn™ Projects, as soon as new approaches are used and documented, they are made available to the team. That means the solution found in one location can be applied in another, without requiring team members to travel. The same workspace can be used to facilitate ongoing collaboration, encouraging team members to share any lessons learned.

#### 5. Cope with change

Managing change effectively is essential to successful team working. With KeyedIn Projects, you can ensure that where changes are agreed, plans are updated and team members informed – so they can adapt accordingly.

### Discover how

Looking to improve the way your organization uses knowledge? 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](http://www.keyedinpso.com) to sign up for a free, no-obligation 15-day trial.



## About KeyedIn™ Solutions

KeyedIn Solutions is focused on helping organizations simplify processes, improve performance and drive results. The company's Cloud-based software systems not only offer greater flexibility, but effectively scale as business needs dictate and can be implemented quickly, delivering a measurable ROI months, or even years ahead of on-premise systems. And KeyedIn offers a true SaaS model, making its solutions affordable for every budget.

KeyedIn Manufacturing is an ERP system that helps custom manufacturers work smarter so they can increase productivity and bring new products to market quickly, for a distinct competitive advantage. KeyedIn Projects, the company's project management suite, helps businesses and professional services organizations improve everything from project initiation to execution by managing programs based on top-line strategy and delivering profitable projects to the bottom line. And when new solutions need to be developed quickly, KeyedIn clients turn to KeyedIn Flex, the company's rapid application development (RAD) platform for affordable applications designed just for them.

When businesses need results fast, they look to the Cloud – and turn to KeyedIn Solutions. You should too. Keep up with us at [www.keyedin.com](http://www.keyedin.com)



Part of the KeyedIn Solutions Business Portfolio



[www.keyedin.com](http://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

Copyright © 2013 KeyedIn Solutions. All rights reserved.

KIPR\_AE\_BR\_JIAKM\_0313