

Parsons Corporation and Primavera: Integration of Technology and Processes for Competitive Edge

Project Management Highlights:

- 50% decrease in schedule creation time
- Immediate ROI
- Integration of accounting, HR, and Primavera software
- 6,000 team members and 4,000 projects managed in system



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Recognizing the opportunity for seamless integration and standardization of both technology and business processes, Parsons pulled all programs together with Primavera® software.

Optimizing Project Management Processes

For most engineering and construction companies, coordination is not an easy task. This was the case for Parsons Corporation. The organization is a full-service engineering, project management, and construction management company that is known for its ability to create innovative solutions and manage complex projects. The company employs 9,500 engineers, designers, scientists, technicians, and support personnel in more than 80 countries. At any given time, the internationally recognized company has more than 2,500 clients and 8,000 projects worldwide. The largest of the five operating business units – the Parsons Infrastructure

& Technology Group (I&T) – oversees 4,000 of the organization's projects while managing 5,000 employees and approximately 1,000 subcontracted workers.

At any given time, Parsons I&T works on approximately 1,000 projects simultaneously. The group also supplies project control support to other Parsons companies. The group wanted to consolidate its projects into programs for use in a multi-user environment where consistent access to project data is needed to maintain control of the projects and the 6,000-member team. The business unit was able to accomplish its objectives by integrating Primavera with all of its disparate software systems.

Parsons' Philosophy of Integration

Parsons I&T realized that one application does not fit all projects—small projects require different project controls



systems than large ones. However, the company wanted integration between its tools regardless of the project mix. Vernon Stultz, the manager of cost and scheduling at Parsons I&T, explained, "Our philosophy on integration is to create a complementary system of software applications that enables project managers to select the most appropriate solutions and have the tools integrate with one other. We like to use each software product at our discretion and ensure the applications seamlessly integrate."

To control every project effectively, the business unit's next step was to integrate the variety of databases and software solutions needed to bring data from every project together into one place for analysis. Using Primavera, this information is automatically replicated into one report without having to manually input the information, eliminating data-entry errors. "When we pull information from one source, you know that all of the numbers are correct and that everyone has the same information, from the project engineer to the project manager up through the corporation to the President of Parsons I&T and the CEO of Parsons, Inc." commented Stultz.

"We believe integration is where project control is headed, and where it has to be," Stultz added. "We view this philosophy as a way to integrate business processes, not just software solutions. By enforcing an overall program control cycle, projects are unlikely to be over budget and/or experience delays, which leads to substantial savings in overall revenue. We are currently in the process of integrating Primavera with human resources and accounting systems, as well as our analytical tools and cost engines. This strategy has proved to be more cost effective in terms of time and money than developing our own in-house system."

"It gives us an advantage over our competitors when we utilize more advanced applications, integrate them to provide

progressive operations, and employ talented people to operate those systems," said Stultz.

The Desire for Flexible Data Exchange

One of the compelling reasons that led to the upgrade to the most recent technology was that the 32-byte application could accommodate Parsons' advanced functionality requests. Parsons needed consistency and common resource bases across its projects—such as standardized resource and activity-coding structures—to achieve its overall objectives.

"We have an ambitious desire to integrate project management, human resources, accounting software, and any in-house created systems," explained Stultz. "This solution will also integrate with Timberline® accounting software on the estimating side and PWORKS (a global project control system) to automatically bring financial data into the system." Furthermore, Parsons is excited that Primavera's advanced project plan template capabilities will enable the company to capture best practices and reuse the most successful projects.

Making Project Management Easier

While improving overall collaboration, the business unit is beginning to utilize Primavera's methodology management functionality. Methodology management helps project managers author and store methodologies, or project plan templates, in a central location and allows those methodologies to be shared as a project standard throughout the group. The methodology function helps project managers to create custom project plans by selecting, combining, and tailoring a project, rather than creating a new plan for each new project. As a result, methodologies are improved and refined by continuously updating the methodology library across the whole unit.

Parsons I&T realized immediate returns after implementing Primavera. "After two months of evaluating our portfolio on a national, multi-year federal government program to define uncoordinated and disconnected efforts and streamlining the entire design process," Stultz explained, "we noticed that our time and effort was repaid by the third time this module was used."

The long-term benefit of using Primavera's methodology management functionality is the ability to construct templates using generic logic that outlines the different types of schedules. This enables schedulers to spend more time focusing on resources than on developing schedules. "With standardization of resource and activity codes, it is easier to

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move resources between projects, identify commonalities, and create schedules, translating into revenue for Parsons and increased project delivery for our clients," noted Stultz. "We have decreased the time it takes to create design schedules by 50 percent, from six to three weeks. The main benefits are the ability to optimize our processes, maintain project consistency, and repeat past project successes."

The Primavera Difference

Project managers like using Primavera because accessing data is very easy due to its advanced collaboration technology. "We have five prime contractors that we use on a consistent basis, and we are now able to easily merge their project

information into one system," commented Stultz. "We can view the entire project as well as analyze and report their individual information in real time over the internet."

As technology evolved at Parsons I&T, the company has maintained a strong working relationship with Primavera. "Primavera was the first PC-based product with complex schedule analysis functionality in the market, and it was a giant step forward," said Stultz. "Parsons has implemented Primavera on many projects ranging from research studies to large design-build projects during our 19-year relationship." As state-of-the-art systems have advanced, Parsons I&T has kept up with the technology.

For example, when Parsons I&T was bidding on the \$7.4 billion Everglades Project in Jacksonville, Florida, the Jacksonville Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District mandated the use of Primavera software. "This project has 125 programs scheduled during its 15-year lifespan. The leading-edge technology of Primavera gives us the ability to handle a project of this scale."

"We've remained with Primavera because its solutions are unmatched and the company provides us with outstanding service," concluded Stultz. "It gives us a strategic advantage to say that we use Primavera software, because our clients trust the Primavera name. It's a tangible benefit to us and to our clients. Equally important is that Primavera listens to their customers."

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