COLLABORATIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Starting Point

The increased complexity and parallelism of projects, distributed project teams with a need for collaboration across company sites and shortened times-to-market confront traditional project management methods and systems with enormous problems. Many tool providers try to face these challenges with even more complex algorithms and more features than ever.

Tools that are overloaded with features and complicated to use, are consequently only utilized by experts and in staff positions – **while real project life takes place mainly in the shadow IT**. Project managers and team members lose much time with gathering, consolidating, and editing information. Besides the unnecessary effort, the manual consolidation of data from various sources leads to an increased error rate – while the quality of project planning and management suffers.

Dr. Rupert Stuffer

Dr. Stuffer has been an expert in the management of complex projects for more than 25 years. He invented the methodology of Collaborative Project Management, wants to develop it in an innovative and visionary way, and make it usable for all kinds of projects.

Collaborative Project Management involves a paradigm shift - active collaboration replaces complex algorithms. In contrast to traditional project management methods, such as the network planning technique, Collaborative Project Management is based on the personal responsibility and the interconnectedness of all project participants.

Mastering the interfaces between the project participants becomes a critical success factor. Experience has shown that projects rarely fail because of the complexity of individual tasks, but more often because of the lack of coordination of the different work packages in the face of mutual dependencies and highly dynamic changes. Clear responsibilities and transparent interfaces are crucial success factors of Collaborative Project Management.

The Origins

In the mid-90s, Dr. Rupert Stuffer, founder of collaboration Factory AG, developed the methodology of "**Collaborative Project Management**" and obtained his doctorate in this field of research. The usability and the high benefit of this methodology have been tried and tested in various vehicle development projects at companies such as BMW, Daimler, Porsche and Bosch. In the meantime, Collaborative Project Management has become the industry standard of the German automotive industry.

With cplace, Collaborative Project Management can be raised to a new level of quality and performance.

cplace is based on modern IT technologies that enable the development of lean, yet highly flexible and powerful software.

Methodology

The basis of this unique methodology is the active involvement of all project participants in the planning and controlling process. The executives or project managers define the project framework by a "top-down" specification of important milestones and key data and thus lay the foundation for the decentralized planning and management of the operative project work.

To this end, the projects are subdivided into small sections and handed over to the persons in charge from the various departments and sites. The departments that have technical responsibility for the project are also in charge of project planning and management. The responsible team members plan their efforts decentrally and autonomously, connect themselves with other sub-projects as required with a high level of self-responsibility. They report back "bottom-up" on the degree of completion and the status of tasks.

Any incoming control tasks are no longer taken over by managers alone but are an integral part of the project work of all team members.

Each team member is responsible for the scope of his or her project and thus his or her partial planning, which is part of an overall networked plan. This creates a transparent working environment in which team members can make the best use of their expertise, also when managing project processes.

Any changes or delays that occur are clarified directly by the project team members concerned and adapted in the individual plans. Only if the clarification "on the spot" is not possible, team members involve the next higher project instance.

The principle of decentralized, self-responsible control loops drastically reduces the complexity of project planning and management. Information, communication, and collaboration replace complex algorithms.

The responsible project team member has the final say in project planning, not the logic of a software algorithm. Important facts are communicated directly to the relevant stakeholders.

Collaborative Project Management provides the ideal methodological support for working methods such as agile development in autonomous teams that are widely used in modern organizations.

Chances Arising From Collaborative Project Management

- **Mastering complexity** in product creation
- **Across sites and companies**
- A central data base with high data security provides up-to-date and **unified planning states**
- **Proactive management** by recognizing potentially disruptive effects of connected sub-projects in time
- **Improved transparency** with clear responsibilies and interfaces
- **Increased planning security and process quality**
- **Integration of all project participants** and support of the accountability of all team members
- **High rates of acceptance and identification** through ease-of-use, demand-oriented functional building blocks and visualizations
- **Improved basis for decision making** with management-ready information presentation at the push of a button
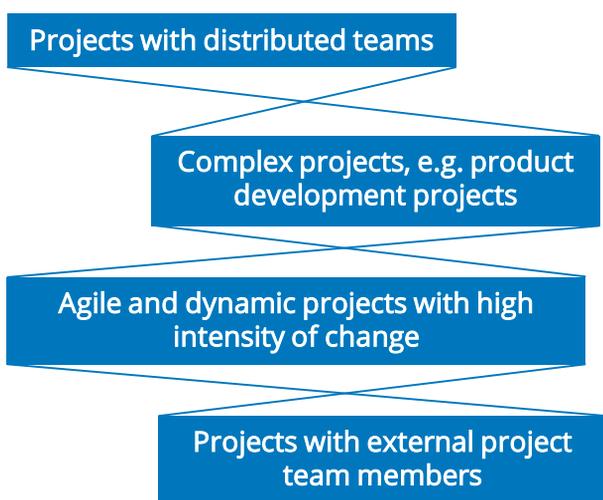
Cross-Company Collaboration

Cross-company collaboration becomes more and more important in today's projects. Collaborative project management breaks the limitations of sites and companies. Based on clear responsibilities and transparent interfaces, even distributed projects can be structured in a goal-oriented way.

Autonomous, interconnected project teams from different organizations work together on cross-company projects.

Cross-linking and synchronization of all sub-projects integrate partners into the planning and control systems and provide a common understanding of planning. **The coordination of all activities and deadlines becomes a crucial factor contributing to collaboration.** Typical use cases are the integration of partners and suppliers, as well as the management of consortia projects or joint ventures.

Typical Use Cases

Projects with distributed teams

Complex projects, e.g. product development projects

Agile and dynamic projects with high intensity of change

Projects with external project team members

The Company

collaboration Factory is a trailblazing software company focusing on project and collaboration management. With great professional expertise and an extraordinary, innovative technology, we develop solutions that significantly improve the way leading high-tech companies work and that are fun to use.

Alone or together with our selected partners, we manage to respond to the needs of our customers in a fast and flexible way and to create individual, integral environments for everyone.

cplace

The flexible platform for project and collaboration management offers a multitude of best practice apps. cplace is a completely web-based application and can be operated in the cloud or as a part of in-house IT. Data storage happens in a single-source database so that all project participants can rely on identical information at any time – always up-to-date and without redundancies.
Solution architects and developers have access to related solutions for relevant business processes. Beyond that, cplace offers a completely new platform concept to create optimal working environments for different user groups and to integrate them into existing data and system landscapes.

Resumee

To meet the challenges of the 21st century, we need future-proof management methods. Traditional project management approaches its limits in times of increasing complexity and dynamic.

Collaborative project management as a modern methodology that is already used successfully helps to solve these challenges.

cplace offers an innovative and advanced software framework for Collaborative Project Management.

Tailor-made, flexibly integrable building blocks for all user groups improve the benefit and thus, the acceptance from all project participants – from management to the operational level.