How **Construc** Uses **Project**Manager for Time Tracking and Project Estimation
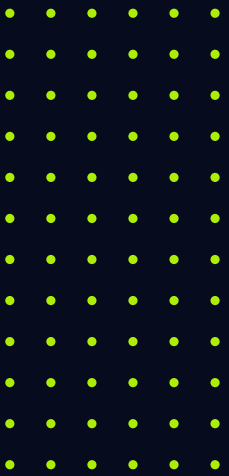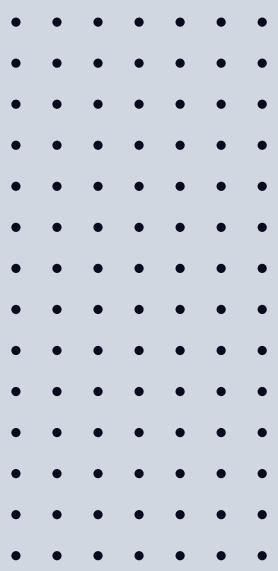
PM ProjectManager

Company name: Construc

Location: Queensland, Australia

Website: construc.com.au

Industry: Construction

Size: <50

Why ProjectManager?

Justin Smith, Director and Senior Construction Engineer at Construc, was initially using spreadsheets to manage workflows, expenses and documentation for structural engineering projects. Even with Monday.com and Microsoft Project, Construc wasn't able to balance resources appropriately, which risked customer relationships. After switching to ProjectManager, Construc could track projects, documents and make more accurate quotes using timesheets and workload management features.

Before ProjectManager

✕ Scribbling notes on paper and unmanageable spreadsheets

✕ Unable to track expenses, which lead to overspending

After ProjectManager

✓ Tracking projects to make more accurate estimates

✓ Secure timesheets make team management more efficient

Justin Smith is the director and senior construction engineer for structural temporary works at Construc Pty Ltd based in Queensland, Australia. He's part of a unique business that avoids marketing and relies solely on word of mouth to generate success.

Ironically, the company grew for years without software. However, relying on paper and spreadsheets became less viable as the industry became more complicated. For Smith, ProjectManager made growth possible and manageable in the new business environment.

"We're structural engineers and our clients are construction firms, formworkers—the stuff that goes into building a building." He works on everything from tunnels to skyscrapers.

Construc began in 2004 with only two employees. "We've always had an office, but I've been working remotely for 16 years," Smith said. "We have a lot of site work, so I'm typically going there and then operating from home."

On site, he does everything from inspections to checking the framework for a concrete pour. There are always work and safety issues to consider as well.

At the beginning, when it was just the two partners, they worked long hours. For five years they hustled and built the company, which continues to grow. As Construc grew, so did the industry. Health and safety was becoming more demanding, and there was a need for greater engineering involvement in construction activities. "Certification and verification, inspections and insurance things," Smith said. "There's a lot of documentation."

Spreadsheets were only causing chaos

"We were in a bit of denial, thinking we could remember and manage everything," Smith admitted. "It was getting pretty chaotic using spreadsheets. My business partner would scribble on the desk. It was every man for himself."

Smith wasn't able to track expenses and that caused the company to spend too much money too quickly. "We had to go back to clients begging for more money over what we initially quoted," he said. "Still, we weren't thinking about project management software."

That's when Construc realized they needed help and started looking for a project management solution.

"We tried Monday.com," Smith said. "I didn't like it. There were pretty colors, but it was a liability in the end. It wasn't helping us. The real tell was that no one was using it. There's no project management aspect to the software. It's almost just a database."

Smith also tested Microsoft Project. He thought it was like their other products, such as Excel and Word. "There were a million things you could do with [Microsoft Project], but you really only need it to do a few things," he said. "It was a bit overwhelming."

It was at that point that Smith knew he had to look seriously into project management software. "I didn't like Monday.com, but there had to be others out there," he said. With his business partner, Smith gathered a list of five top contenders from conducting online research, one of which was ProjectManager.

"It was getting pretty chaotic using spreadsheets. My business partner would scribble on the desk. It was every man for himself," Smith said.

"I started using ProjectManager and it just felt comfortable to me," he said. That was about three years ago. As Construc grew, so did their relationship with ProjectManager.

Initially, Smith wanted functionality similar to a giant calendar that could show everyone's work. But he started watching the tutorial videos on ProjectManager's website that showed the countless powerful features of the tool and what they can do.

"I especially liked the time-keeping and timesheets," he said. "I had been wasting so much time on timesheets. But with ProjectManager, it was easy. That's when I thought, this could work."

Smith took the trial and after a month was able to negotiate with sales to extend that trial period. "ProjectManager is a smaller company and I appreciate the personal service they provide," he said. "It's not a Microsoft-style monster."

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The ease of tracking schedules, resources and documents

Smith had been using ProjectManager exclusively at Construc for about a year when others started to join him. The consensus was positive. "It's brilliant," he said. "We could start tracking our projects and making more accurate quotes. It was fantastic."

ProjectManager also makes it easy to record everyone's hours and oversee schedules all in one place. The risk management features help Construc deal with safety regulations on site and, of course, can also help with financial risks.

"I brought on ProjectManager to help us with the documentation," said Smith, but he learned that it can do so much more than offer unlimited file storage. His team can use the mobile app to capture images at the work site and add them to the tool.

"We do mostly short-term projects and ProjectManager's allocation feature is great," Smith said. "You can see each person's workload and balance it if someone is too busy. There's also the filters. They're an elegantly simple, but powerful way to find anything fast."

He added that when you walk through the Construc office, everyone has a monitor dedicated to ProjectManager, with the software open the whole time. "That was the real hallelujah moment for me," he said. "Everyone is loving ProjectManager."

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