



CASE STUDY

SmartPM Helps Construct Enterprise
Solution for Schedule Analytics at STO

"I can create a filter for our different business units, even for different schedulers and schedule managers. I can get a snapshot of how all their projects are doing."

- Brandon Howell, Vice President of Scheduling | Layton Construction Company, LLC

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CHALLENGE

Brandon Howell, Vice President of Scheduling for Layton Construction Company, LLC, has been fascinated by schedule analytics for much of his professional career. **"There are almost limitless insights you can extract from the schedule,"** he noted. **"It's much more than just a reporting tool."**

Unfortunately, distilling data into dashboards without certain controls is very time-consuming.

SMART SOLUTION

While attending a scheduling conference, Howell and his team were introduced to SmartPM. After witnessing a few demos, the company purchased 10 slots to pilot a handful of projects. Based on their satisfaction with the pilot, the company jumped from 10 projects to 250.

According to Howell, company schedulers use the program most frequently; for the three companies in STO West - one of STO's three divisions that includes Layton, Abbott Construction, and STO Southwest - that's a total of 32 schedulers. SmartPM is also integrated directly with STO West's BA tool, which displays numerous metrics related to each

RESULTS

With 170 active projects in the SmartPM database, Howell doesn't have time to check on each one individually. That's part of the reason SmartPM developed the Company Dashboard: a hub to view the key metrics across all of a company's projects.

"The nice thing about the Company Dashboard is it's simple to find exactly what I'm looking for in a matter of seconds," noted Howell. **"It even gives me a 'top three' project list, categorized by schedule risk, compression, or whatever criteria I'm looking for. It shows me the projects with the squeaky wheels, the ones that need the most attention."**

Occasionally, there is a legal dispute between the company and a project owner; having a tool like SmartPM on his side is a major plus. Thankfully, Howell hasn't had to call on SmartPM very often. But there is one particular Layton project on which it definitely came in handy.

"The project owner was focused on a metric called 'Commitments Met,'" he recalled. **"That is, out of all the activities we were supposed to start since**

"I would work with our in-house data analysts for hours trying to generate these dashboards," he recalled. **"Besides being very time-consuming, there were several technical issues. The data coming into the BA tool was unreliable, so our people stopped trusting it. Ultimately, we were doing all this work, and the dashboards weren't even being used."**

project's budget, safety, RFIs, and submittal logs. With the addition of SmartPM's analytics, Howell's team created a section for scheduling metrics in the tool's project review dashboard, including the handful of key metrics they want easily accessible to project teams for monthly project reviews with their executive teams.

Howell introduced SmartPM to the other two companies in the division. Now, Howell manages and oversees the scheduling efforts not only for Layton Construction but for the entire STO West division - with SmartPM playing a key role in helping his team build schedules that make sense.

the previous month's update, what percentage did we actually start?"

According to the consultant's calculations, Layton hadn't started a whopping 85% of those activities. Layton's own analysis showed essentially the same figure. However, using SmartPM, Howell tried to dig deeper into the reasons for the low score. The platform allowed Howell to filter and sort all the critical path (or near critical path) activities.

"I was able to show the consultant that we didn't hit those dates because of all the owner delays," he explained. **"Plus, out of all the activities where commitments weren't met, only two were on the critical path. It was easy to counter the broad statement that we missed 85% of our commitments by showing the consultant where the problems originated."**

The positive experience that STO West has had with SmartPM will no doubt spread throughout the other divisions. It's tough to keep good news like that a secret for very long.

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