SmartPM™

Case Study

Chris Taylor is Co-lead for the scheduling team at Garver responsible for overseeing their work with State DOT's.

GARVER

Garver Leverages SmartPM Schedule Analytics to Increase Efficiency Across their Projects

"

We have completely changed our process. I'm spending less than half my time on schedules and reviews.

200% + increase in dept productivity

BACKROUND

Since 1919, Garver has been on the ground floor of the highways, bridges, airport runways, and water treatment plants that our communities need to grow and prosper. What started as a one-person engineering firm with a short list of projects, has evolved into a leading multi-disciplined engineering and consulting firm impacting communities across the country.

Today, Garver is an employee-owned multi-disciplined engineering, planning, architectural, and environmental services firm with 37 offices and more than 900 employees across the United States. Garver offers a wide range of services focused on aviation, construction, facilities design, federal, survey, transportation, water, and wastewater.

Chris Taylor spent much of his career working in the transportation sector for the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) as an engineer. He joined Garver in May 2020 as part of Garver's Construction Scheduling Team for their transportation division.

CHALLENGE

Department of Transportation (DOT) construction has its own unique set of challenges that can vary by state. But one of the biggest challenges, across the board, is time. In the DOT world, the #1 cause of delays are change orders. Many of these projects span over five years and determining if a change order, from a year ago, caused the delay is a very time-consuming process.
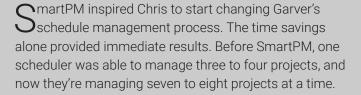
According to Chris, he's had "contractors go back and change actual dates in the schedule calendars from five or six updates prior just to make an impact look worse than it was." This is a common occurrence in construction, and often takes weeks and weeks pouring over spreadsheets, running macros, printing calendars, and comparing them at each update cycle, just to make sense of the information. Despite his painstaking, time-consuming efforts, there was always data that couldn't be accessed at all. The delay in providing concrete evidence to contractors—proving causation—often leads to arguments and claims.

With more and more projects on the horizon, Chris began looking for alternatives to the manual process of analyzing schedules and changes.

> It only takes me 3 weeks to train junior level schedulers how to review schedules and reports. Before SmartPM it took 3-4 months just to train a senior level scheduler.

"

SOLUTIONS

Chris first heard about SmartPM when he joined Garver. A couple of schedulers were using it to analyze time impacts (TIA), so Chris decided to check it out for himself. He missed the initial onboarding but found that he was able to navigate through the software relatively easily. He was also impressed that all the data he was missing was right there. In fact, the analytics that normally took him months to calculate were instantly calculated with every schedule update. Because the metrics are mathematically calculated from data, all the results are unbiased.

Based on these initial results, Chris realized that SmartPM was being underutilized and reached out to SmartPM's customer success team. He began meeting with them regularly to ask questions and learn more and more about the product as well as gain more insight into the very foundation of the Critical Path Method (CPM), from which all scheduling software programs are derived.

"

> Being able to efficiently manage more projects without adding to our overhead has definitely increased our ROI.

RESULTS

SmartPM inspired Chris to start changing Garver's schedule management process. The time savings alone provided immediate results. Before SmartPM, one scheduler was able to manage three to four projects, and now they're managing seven to eight projects at a time.

As mentioned, change orders are the #1 cause of delays and proving one is a root cause of a delay is always a struggle...until SmartPM. Armed with the critical insights SmartPM now provided Garver, they were able to show clients the huge impact their change management process was having on delays: it was taking their clients months to negotiate change orders! SmartPM's delay analysis was able to show the impacts to their projects through visual data and graphs. From that point on, there were no more arguments—Garver's change order process became faster and more efficient.

Garver understands that the metrics and analyses generated through SmartPM provide value to all parties involved in their projects. According to Chris, most stakeholders don't have access to Microsoft Project or P6, and SmartPM allows everyone to see the data in one place. Being able to see important project metrics on the Dashboard generates meaningful conversations between stakeholder because SmartPM translates schedule data so it makes sense to everyone, not just the schedulers.

SmartPM has made such an impact at Garver that they now consider it to be their competitive advantage. Chris recalls a phone call from his boss, Mark Schwartz Program Controls Manager, after a presentation to a potential client. Mark was asked what set Garver apart from their competitors. His answer was "SmartPM."

When Chris first logged into SmartPM, his goal was to save time in the schedule management process. What he found was that SmartPM provides more than just a time savings; it has changed Garver's entire process and has more than doubled their productivity. Garver is continuing to add SmartPM to more of their projects, with plans to leverage SmartPM on their projects in other sectors.

Gain Visibility into Your Schedule with SmartPM

Request Demo

53 Perimeter Center East, #200
Atlanta, GA 30346
(404) 329-3000
www.smartpm.com