

Five Ways to Make Sure You're Getting the Reporting Data You Need

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Everyone has a crucial role in bringing a construction project to reality. And each one faces expectations to stay on track to meet client requirements. To do that means having the information necessary to make critical decisions and determine appropriate courses of action to maintain progress.

Much of those details are found in the daily construction reports that give visibility into and an understanding of where things are with a project. Of course, each role – contractor, construction manager, owner, project team, etc. – will rely on different nuggets of detail those reports contain.

How can they ensure they're pulling the reports they need that pertain to their unique role? There are several ways to ensure this.

Digitalize

Invest in construction daily reporting software.

Large projects yield large volumes of details that must be entered into the daily reports. Akin to “a day in the life” of a construction project, these reports deliver an ongoing narrative on such wide-ranging facets of the build as project progress, emerging bottlenecks on the job site, areas to improve workflow, and compliance with contract requirements.

The software consolidates all these details in a centralized platform that acts as a hub for the real-time data from which all reports, no matter how specialized, are pulled. No risk of information being undecipherable, outdated, lost, or misplaced.



Itemize

Make sure all parties responsible for providing report data do so in thorough detail for an accurate account of the day's activities.

The old saying “the devil is in the details” certainly applies here. Gathering and recording all the day's standard reporting information is widely known to be a necessary yet time-consuming, arduous process.

Daily reporting software has instead made this quicker, easier, and repeatable for consistent data capture on-site – from checklists that document quality inspections, to templated forms that collect the information you specify, to the ability to upload supporting materials such as jobsite photos, videos, and screenshots of emails and contracts, for example.

One thing to note: ensure a companion mobile app can be accessed by a smartphone or jobsite tablet. This makes itemizing all the required data a real-time activity that feeds

into the software's ability to produce reports reflecting the latest accurate information all project teams can rely on.

Customize

Determine what data each stakeholder group needs to know and when they need it, then tailor their reports. All the details have been collected and corralled.

Now comes the customization. Each stakeholder has their own scope of responsibilities and will want only the relevant data that falls under their purview.

So before creating the construction reports, find out the specific information each stakeholder needs. What types of decisions do they have to make? What risks do they manage? What metrics do they need to monitor? What level of detail will best support them? When do they need it, and how frequently? Are they only concerned with a particular phase, location, or resource? What filters should be set up to ensure they get just the required data?

With customized data sets firmed up for each individual stakeholder or project team, the software can automate report assembly and delivery at a set time each day.

Visualize

Use data visualization throughout reports and supplement with a tool like dashboards. When determining what each audience needs, there's one more question: What format(s) do they prefer to best convey this information? This is an opportunity to customize individual reports even further. Because just as important as having the right type of reporting data is how it's served up.


Data visualization tools can be used to present particular kinds of data in a clear, concise way, especially for those who may be non-expert decision makers. They cull and summarize the relevant data and present it in easy-to-follow formats within the report – such as charts, tables, and graphs – for anyone to gauge performance at a glance. Understandable data becomes actionable data.

Customized online data dashboards are a helpful but separate supplement to the daily report distribution. Monitoring data and making decisions on the go becomes far more convenient and efficient, whether out on the job site, in the back office, or in a remote location.

Analyze

Rely on earned value management for performance metrics to evaluate progress, trends, and potential risks. So, you know the types of information everyone needs and the formats most conducive to helping them do their job. They also need to know what to do with that information. Enter earned value management (EVM) metrics – real-time performance indicators condensed from all project data of how things are truly going.

Daily reports (and dashboards) allow each stakeholder or project team to track how their select data points or risk factors are performing. Is everything running efficiently? Is anything beginning to trend up or down toward the limits of their operating ranges that may require extra attention? Do they need to involve other decision makers to collaborate on courses of action?

Insights and decisions enabled by cost and schedule performance metrics become even stronger when everyone can analyze trends based on prior project data. Incorporating past project performance gives a comparative view by serving as a benchmark against which to gauge what current reporting data is indicating, adding depth and context to how that project should or could be performing. 



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