

We recently encountered the question “Why do we need Project Management software when we have Post-it notes?” on Twitter. Considering how effective a Post-it note can be when my wife needs me to accomplish a project, I thought the question was justified and felt compelled to respond with a brief explanation. The simple answer is that there are certain situations where Post-its are good enough and then there are situations where project management software would be a whole lot more helpful.

### **CAN POST-ITS EASILY MANAGE MULTIPLE RESOURCES AND NUMEROUS TASKS?**

Post-it notes can be a fine instrument for communication in situations such as reminding yourself of an appointment, jotting down items to pick up at the store, or pretty much any time you have a single task project requiring a single resource. For example, if my wife wants me to sweep the garage, she can surely communicate that to me effectively with the use of a single Post-it note. The problem with Post-it notes becomes more apparent as my wife adds more complexity to the project. Let’s say my wife decides that I need to completely renovate the garage, and to assist me she’s procured the assistance of some of my friends. Now she’s managing a project with multiple resources and numerous tasks. She needs to be able to communicate clearly to each of the resources on the project (me and my friends), as well as, align the correct tasks so that we complete the project in the shortest amount of time with the least amount of risk. In addition, I have a techie friend that has offered to build us one of those fancy garage remotes that can lift the garage door, turn on the lights and activate the sprinklers, but in order to complete the remote he has to work out of his home office. So, now my wife has to communicate the priority of the tasks to the resources on site as well as one off site. Is it possible with Post-it notes? Certainly, but it would surely require ample time and effort by my wife, as well as carry a high risk of miscommunication among the project stakeholders (my wife, myself, and my friends).

### **CAN POST-ITS DETERMINE HOW TO BEST UTILIZE RESOURCES?**

Now if my wife chooses to use PM software, she can more easily and effectively communicate vital project information to the project stakeholders. Let’s say she uses a schedule management tool, such as Oracle | Primavera P6. By simply loading the tasks with duration estimates, resource estimates, and sequencing the tasks, she can determine how to complete the project in the shortest amount of time while utilizing the resources as efficiently as possible and with the least amount of risk. She can then communicate that information to the stakeholders via e-mail, hard copy print offs, or give the resources access to the tasks they are responsible for via the web portal. Try to get your Post-it notes to do that!

### **CAN POST-ITS HELP YOU MITIGATE RISK?**

My wife may also choose to use the assistance of a risk analysis tool such as Oracle | Primavera Risk Analysis to calculate the potential impact of identified risks on our project. As part of renovating our garage, we have decided to replace the roof of the garage. Obviously the weather may impact our ability to reroof the garage. My wife can place a risk event for a thunder storm into the risk analysis tool and then the tool will run a Monte Carlo analysis to calculate how that event may impact the baseline schedule and baseline cost estimates for the project. Using this information, my wife can prepare a cost and schedule contingency into the plan to account for these risk impacts.

### **CAN POST-ITS TRACK INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATE TO EACH OTHER?**

Finally my wife may decide to utilize a contract management application such as Oracle|Primavera Contract Management to track pertinent information regarding the supervision of contracts. Let's say that my wife and I have decided that we no longer need that fancy garage remote to activate our sprinklers. We now need to change the scope of the work on the contract we have agreed to with my techie friend. She can communicate that change to my techie friend via an e-mail that originates from the contract management application, and then can immediately discern the impact of that change on the schedule and cost baselines established for the project through the application. In effect, she can have the change in the contract in the contract management application communicate that change to the schedule management application to reveal the impact of that change on the other aspects of the project. All of this can be accomplished in a matter of a few clicks of her mouse. Good luck trying to get Post-it notes to communicate with one another!

### **WRAP-UP: BENEFITS OF PM SOFTWARE**

So as we can see, the need for PM software comes from the complexity of managing projects in general. As shown in this article, a few of the benefits of PM software is that the software can assist project managers with the following tasks: managing multiple stakeholders with different communication needs, properly sequencing tasks to ensure they are completed in the shortest time period at the lowest risk, utilizing project resources in the most efficient manner, analyzing potential risk impacts on the project schedule and budget, and communicating contract changes to key stakeholders and quickly incorporating those changes into the schedule and budget.

I hope that you have enjoyed this article. For more information about how PM software can assist your organization with the management of projects, please visit our website at [www.EvansTech.com](http://www.EvansTech.com) or give us a call at 770-751-9950.