

The Digital Construction Project Manager

Being a Construction Project Manager (CPM) is a stressful occupation with many modern day challenges.

Construction a highly competitive, low margin sector that has seen minimal improvement in productivity over decades. With digitisation various aspects of the upfront design phases and the downstream final facility management activities have been integrated and automated; however, the construction phase has lagged behind. This is owing to poor Internet coverage at remote locations, design changes during construction, established systems and procedures, compliance requirements and some prevailing habits of seasoned construction workers and foremen.

Now, with an industry under pressure, the 'traditional' CPM must increasingly embrace digitisation to become more productive and integrated across the project life-cycle.

Over the past two years, more than 1 500 construction technology up-start companies have developed applications specific to the construction industry. These software and digital tools focus on various management functions of construction such as real time availability of the latest drawings and on-field capturing of mark-ups, improved 4D capabilities and real-time progress tracking through infrared and drone applications, real time sensors and detectors monitoring the delivery and movement of materials, real time monitoring of crew movement and deployment, mobile applications for design snag lists and immediate notification of non-compliances and defects, update and track contract compliance and the management of payments as well as real time safety monitoring and immediate alert in case of incidents.

As these applications are refined, the challenge for the CPM will be to confront traditional work methods with a new digitised environment. The era of the Digital CPM (DCPM) has dawned and they will be faced with the renewed challenge of digital collaboration and coordination.

However, for project managers to get the most out of these digital tools, they need to understand their own and other peoples' behaviour. No matter how many digital tools are deployed, people will ultimately remain central to achieving project outcomes and benefits.

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