PROJECT MANAGEMENT BY MEANS OF THE INTERNET – - PROJECT COLLABORATIVE EXTRANET

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Key words

project management, internet, communication, information, project team

manažment projektový, internet, komunikácia, informácia, tím projektový

Introduction

At the present time, effective co-ordination and communication of project management are highly requested due to rising requirements to introduce new product to market or finish construction works in as short term as possible. Project Collaborative Extranet system represents a possible source for making project management more effective as well as it enables team members to access project data on-line and their sharing via internet, and also enables connection between geographically comminuted project team. This system at the same time serves as master archive of project documents.

Project communication and co-ordination

Project management can be defined as application of knowledge's, possibilities of tools, methods and practices for project activities in order to achieve the goals of the project. Project management includes stages of initiation, scheduling, realisation, checking and finishing the project. Project manager and his team is responsible for completion of the goals of project with required level of quality and extent while meeting budget and time schedule.

Large amount of project manager's work is based on work with people, their guidance and on organising them. Further, he shall be able to work and communicate with people, because as we all know, people are the most important factor of project's success. Project manager shall be able to create working environment that enables efficient inspection, co-ordination and communication between all participants of project, from project team, through clients to respective subcontractors, because most of the issues arose during project, results from undue communication and inefficient co-ordination and inspection.

Communication is performed during conversations, discussions, meetings and consultations, as well as during changing messages, opinions and news. Communication with the project environment represents an important role of managing the project. Communication problems in projects have to be identified, analysed and solved immediately. The ability to communicate and use communication styles, represent important quality of project manager's features.

Project Collaborative Extranet

In the cases where projects are participated by more contractors form different organisations, which in the most of cases are not present in the location of project, the Web-based Project Management comes as an essential tool for making communication more effective. These systems can be used as simple systems for file transmission between respective participants of project, based on e-mail services as well as complex system operated on host-servers with integrated administration of documents and with other functions for example project calendar with personnel schedules of respective participants of project. Systems such these are called Project Collaborative Extranet.

Project Collaborative Extant applications support and make easier the communication, co-operation and co-ordination of activities among company employees, customers and sub-vendors in all stages of project and enable the project team to access the most up-to-date documents from any location, at any time, without the need to maintain massive paper files and thus they help to avoid problems, when a part of team works with uncurrent or incorrect designs. These systems further represents tool for on-line co-operation and for file and information transmission, thus enabling to create an environment wherein basic documents for strategic decision-taking are enhanced and their recovery is faster. This feature is important especially in the case when organisation consist of dispersed places of work.

Project Collaborative Extranet systems enable to publish information about project, which in the most cases are separated (organisation of project, costs, timeframes, time schedule, etc.) and presented in various versions e.g. charts, plans, pictures and compendious abstracts with traffic-lights, which displays the importance of respective information and activities. Project team shall decide the datas and their level of detail to be accessed advisable for respective participants of project, so that they have all the information necessary for their work and on the other hand to ensure revision of crucial information.

Respective Project Collaborative Extranet systems offer various services and tools for working with project documents. The difference lies in our decision to buy whether simply or more advanced application. The more simple application works can be used only as master archive, what can be accessed through internet; so there is saved complete document history in the archive, so that the previous version can be restored at any time. More advanced applications enable multiple manipulation for documents, to create list of documents saved in respective project sections, multiple uploads for documents including their assignation to relevant section based on convention for document entitling. [1]

Some applications of Project Collaborative Extranet offer tools for discussions about documents by attaching annotation or by on-line chat too.

System requirements and safety

The customers offen require integration of system into functioning data sources, which are introduced in company already, or integration into functioning intranet environment. Thus Project Collaborative Extranet systems can become a part of company information system. From this reason opened architecture of system is necessary.

The decision what information will be shared by Project Collaborative Extranet system should consider also how are respective participants o project connected to internet. If the majority of them is connected by telephone links, then saving of large files e.g. AutoCAD drawings and their opening to/from server will take too much time and this can disrupt the success of project implementation.

Project Collaborative Extranet are systems based on sharing of project data by internet, and that is why customers in the most of cases need only connection to internet and internet browser for operating this system.

Project Collaborative Extranet enables sharing of project documents among internal and external users e.g. customers of project and sub-contractors. Therefore it is necessary the system to provide a safe platform for information sharing. To check the access to net (system) as well as to protect confidentiality and integrity of data, are purposes of any computer net (system) protection. Data are vulnereable and exposed to "attacks and stealth" and it holds good both during standstill and transmission. System both has to guarantee integrity of data and has to be well secured against unauthorised access.

Project Collaborative Extranet in the most of cases are equipped with user defined administration of level protection up to the level of data onjects and users. Because of different user needs for data access and their authorisation to access data, there

should be the possibility to set the access authorisation to respective functions and project sections. Respective project participants consequently are given access only to information needed for their work. Designer thus can e.g. access the drawing documentation, whereas investor can access cost overviews.

Conclusion

Project Collaborative Extranet support and make easier co-operation and co-ordination of activities between rojct team, customer and sub-vendors in each stages, thus both making easier communication between respective project participants and making more effective the work on whole project. Main contributions of using Project Collaborative Extranet are:

- top management is well informed about current state,
- improvement of the ability to eliminate consequences of delays and budget overruns,
- elimination of errors resulting from wrong communication,
- creating both of construction process (of project) archive and current stage documentation, etc.

Many organisations of those which are already using Project Collaborative Extranet find out the main contribution as optimalization of project processes and minimalization both of communication and co-ordination errors. Project Collaborative Extranet enable to effective control the project and ensures the support of exact information for correct people in reasonable
time.

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