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We're pleased to share the following whitepaper from our partner M-Files...

## 5 Ways Document Management is a Game-Changer for Streamlining Construction Projects

# INTRODUCTION

Documents are potentially the least exciting aspect of construction, but they're also one of the most important. While many construction professionals loathe tracking documentation, it must be done correctly, or it can lead to costly mistakes. But how much of this lies in disliking paperwork, and how much of it lies in disliking how paperwork is usually done?

Old methods of handling construction paperwork aren't just tedious, but also potentially disastrous. Without the control of a document management system, construction documents quickly become unwieldy and difficult to sort through. On top of that, customers are often making changes and requests, and all of it gets wrapped up into a ball of confusion.

Solutions are designed to streamline and optimise the process of managing your construction-related documents, plans, and files. With a document management solution, many of the more tedious aspects of paperwork, like searching for information, are essentially automated. Documents are distributed to everyone at once, and clients no longer need to wait for the files they've requested.

There are many reasons why construction document management platforms like Excitech DOCS and M-Files make for more successful projects. Here, we're going to outline five of the most practical reasons.

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**£7.50**

the cost every time a piece of paper is touched[1]

Reworking a project can cost up to

**20%**

of the final cost of the project[2]

# 01

## EVERYTHING THAT CAN GO WRONG, WILL GO WRONG

Even the best laid plans will often go awry. Whether it's an equipment breakdown, late suppliers, or a last-minute change, there are issues in construction that you must be able to track on-the-go. Document management makes it easier to file and follow up on these types of issues, while also creating a chain of responsibility and accountability.

The number of documents for projects can range from 100 to 1000, depending on the size and scope of the project. That number doesn't even include the countless versions and revisions to plans, drawings and other documents. Rewind thirty years ago, and that meant stacks of paperwork in the job trailer with attached revision notes and new prints coming daily. Not anymore.

[1] Gartner Group.
[2] Federal University of Technology Minna

Imagine a system that reduces the amount of paper copies and makes it easy for you to change project specifications anywhere from any device, communicate with vendors and contractors, and update the information that is going to your clients. A single price change can be automatically distributed throughout the network, and all involved parties will be able to sign-off immediately. This is the type of agility that a good solution can offer.

And it isn't just mistakes you need to track; construction projects evolve. If you aren't on top of these changes and if communication and mismanagement occur, you'll find yourself having to work and rework the project again. Reworking a project can cost up to 20% of the final cost of the project, but with the right document management, it doesn't have to. The right document management system makes changes trivial to initiate and implement.

# 02
## CLIENTS WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO

Clients understandably want to be involved throughout the process of construction. Not only is that good for their own peace of mind, but it's also good for you. It's easier to ensure that the client gets exactly what they want when they're involved, but by the same token, it can take a lot of time to bring them up to speed.

Cloud-based construction document management makes it easier for customers to self-service, reviewing new documents, plans, and media as it has been completed. Customers can leave notes on documents and ask questions, which can then be reviewed and responded to at the company's leisure. Altogether, this provides greater input from the client while also making them feel like they are an important part of the process.

*"Apps like M-Files and Excitech DOCS provide the single source for project information needed to give clients information that's easy for them to search and find, giving them critical access to in-depth information about how the project is going."*

Modern construction platforms make all information available in real-time to clients, owners and stakeholders including 2D drawings, 3D models, and other files. Apps like M-Files and Excitech DOCS provide the single source for project information needed to give clients information that's easy for them to search and find, giving them critical access to in-depth information about how the project is going.

# 03
## TRACKING MARKUPS IS DIFFICULT WITHOUT THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

*"If notes were lost or failed to be translated from the field, then the markups may never occur at all and issues could easily arise later."*

In the old days, markups had to be done manually. Notes were taken in the field, changes were made at the office, and all the plans then had to be revised accordingly. If notes were lost or failed to be translated from the field, then the markups may never occur at all and issues could easily arise later.

Every construction project, even the small and simple ones, increases in complexity over time. Adjustments need to be made by multiple articles, and all these need to be tracked in a consolidated solution.

Document management systems that are tailored for construction companies make this process much easier, by letting contractors and construction workers make changes directly to the centralised and synced files.

Not only will all the notes be transitioned to the same document server, but the system will track who added the notes and when, to make it easier to hunt down version changes for information and clarification. Altogether, this makes the entire process of tracking construction information easier for all involved parties.

*"The proliferation of media across the construction industry has made it far easier to achieve desirable outcomes, but it also means that there must be a place for all this data to be stored."*
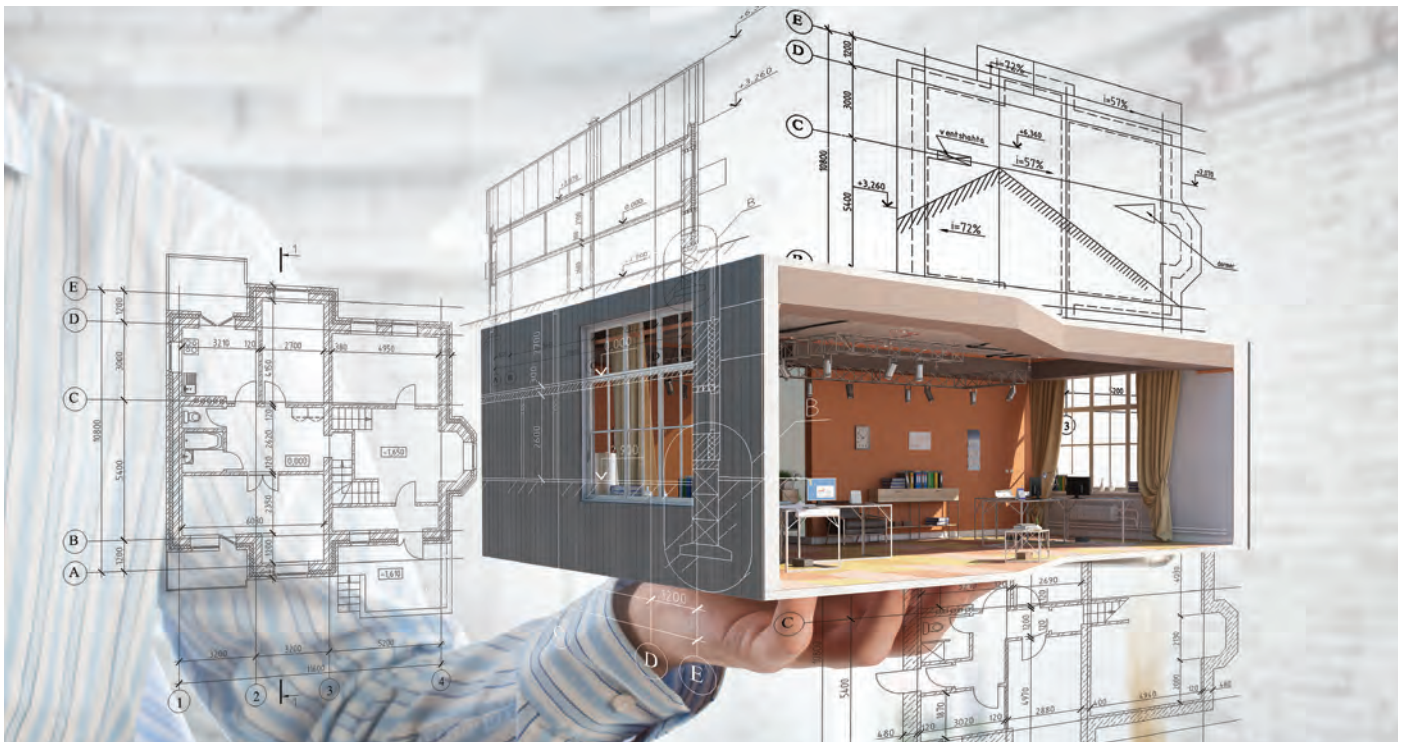
# 04

## MODERN CONSTRUCTION SITES ARE USING MORE MEDIA THAN EVER BEFORE

Construction sites aren't just using blueprints. Construction sites are using 2D plans, 3D scans, and a host of other complex media that needs to be able to be reviewed, shared, and modified. The proliferation of media across the construction industry has made it far easier to achieve desirable outcomes, but it also means that there must be a place for all this data to be stored.

Construction documents and construction data require a lot of space, especially when it comes to 3D building modeling, scans, and simulations. Moreover, it's important that all parties involved are able to review these items of media, uploading their own files, adding notes to other files, and categorising files by revision.

Construction document management systems offer an all-in-one platform that provides accessibility and security to these files. Not only are these files stored in a way in which they can be easily viewed from anywhere, but they are also stored safely, so the data will not be potentially lost. Cloud-based solutions can store tremendous volumes of data, while syncing the data across multiple servers to protect it from data loss.

And, finally...

# 05
## PLANNING YOUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT INCORRECTLY WILL COST YOU MORE IN THE LONG RUN.

Ultimately, document management planning solutions make it easier to take control over your project. All the data you need for your construction project is hosted in a single solution. Clients and contractors alike will be able to connect to your document management solution to review files and information, and everyone will be better coordinated and more communicative.

Increasing communication and transparency in this way greatly reduces the chances of miscommunications and mistakes, both of which are incredibly costly. Planning a construction project incorrectly costs a lot of money, and it happens more frequently than anyone wants to admit. In truth, it's very easy for a construction project to start working off the wrong plans or to start working on the wrong revisions; when documents are not properly sorted and categorised, it's almost inevitable.

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Document management solutions offer a failsafe against these potential mistakes, using new and advanced technologies to keep everyone involved on the same page. With a unified set of plans, a construction document management solution makes it easier for companies to optimise and streamline their construction processes, completing their projects faster and more reliably.

# CONCLUSION

A construction project is successful when it comes in under budget and before its deadline. Construction document management systems can help. Through a unified, consolidated document management system, construction companies can reduce their chances of costly miscommunications and mistakes. In doing so, they are also able to improve their overall outcomes.

Increased transparency throughout a construction project will make the project more likely to be completed to the requested specifications, in addition to adding to a client's peace of mind. Further, document management solutions can leverage advanced new technologies to produce more reliable and accurate data; data which can be distributed throughout the project and can be used to optimise and improve upon the project.

Ultimately, document management systems pay for themselves in cost savings and improved client service. Even better, they automate many of the technical and administrative tasks that construction companies don't want to have to do on their own.

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