CASE STUDY

Lincoln Middle School Addition and Renovation

Perfect Timing: SmartPM Makes
Schedule Analysis Proactive for
S. M. Wilson & Co.

"You should try SmartPM because it's going to make you
a better scheduler. There's no if, ands, or buts. If you use
the system, you will be better."

- Jamie Berzon, Chief Technology Officer. | S.M. Wilson & Co.

SM WILSON

CHALLENGE

When it came to schedule analysis, S. M. Wilson's timing was a bit off. Like many construction firms, S. M. Wilson - which provides a complete range of services, including pre-construction, construction management, general contracting, and design/build – relied on third-party consultants to review the schedules of certain completed projects.

Post-project analyses can be useful in understanding exactly where a schedule went off track, especially in cases where litigation is involved. However, these **"after-the-fact"** analyses usually have a negligible effect on improving future schedule quality. S. M. Wilson, however, proved to be the exception—in a roundabout way.

"We had several schedules being analyzed by outside consultants using SmartPM," explained Kerry Lorts, the company's Director of Operations. **"Our Chief Operating Officer, who was working with these consultants, sent me an email asking about the program and whether it was something we should check out."**

Lorts subsequently arranged product demos for Wilson's top executives. Their response was immediate.

SMART SOLUTION

"The executives who witnessed the demo all had the same reaction," recalled Jamie Berzon, S. M. Wilson's Chief Technology Officer. **"They said, 'Wait, can we have this tool? Why aren't we doing this?'"**

This was followed by a realization – and another question. **"Then they asked, 'Why are we paying [consultants] to use this program when we can just use it ourselves on all our schedules - and do it ahead of time?'"**

It was a simple but powerful question that addressed the issue of timing—the kind of timing that has exerted such a powerful impact on Wilson's entire scheduling process.

"SmartPM is making us more proactive than reactive, which is funny, especially when you're talking about a tool that analyzes your schedule," noted Berzon. **"But we're actually able to get ahead of things now and analyze things before they happen."**

"We realized that if we can get in front of the schedule, they can't come back and haunt us later because we'll know we've built the best ones we could with the information we were provided."

Lorts agrees. **"SmartPM has brought the whole topic of scheduling to the forefront of conversations earlier in the project, during pre-construction. Now, we're discussing what true logic should look like and if there should be weather-related or other constraints built into the project."**

RESULTS

For tangible results of SmartPM's effectiveness, Lorts pointed to a school project whose schedule could have proven troublesome.

"We have a school project where the next three to four years are dependent on moving from one area to the next in a phased renovation," said Lorts. **"Using SmartPM helped us avoid paying general conditions for an additional school year by identifying a procurement activity that was driving the critical path in a phased renovation project."**

Aside from avoiding an entire year of general conditions and related indirect costs, when asked why he would recommend SmartPM, Lorts said: **"I'd recommend using SmartPM because it's a proactive, collaborative approach to scheduling that allows you to see your issues before they happen. With SmartPM, you don't have to retroactively do delay analysis and schedule analysis because you're seeing those in real-time and being smarter about what you do."**

To Berzon, when asked the same question, **"Choosing SmartPM was a no-brainer. You should try SmartPM because it's going to make you a better scheduler. There's no if, ands, or buts. If you use the system, you will be better."**

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