ORACLE

Five Collaboration Challenges and How to Fix Them Today

Overcome barriers that hinder project teamwork

What is collaboration, really?

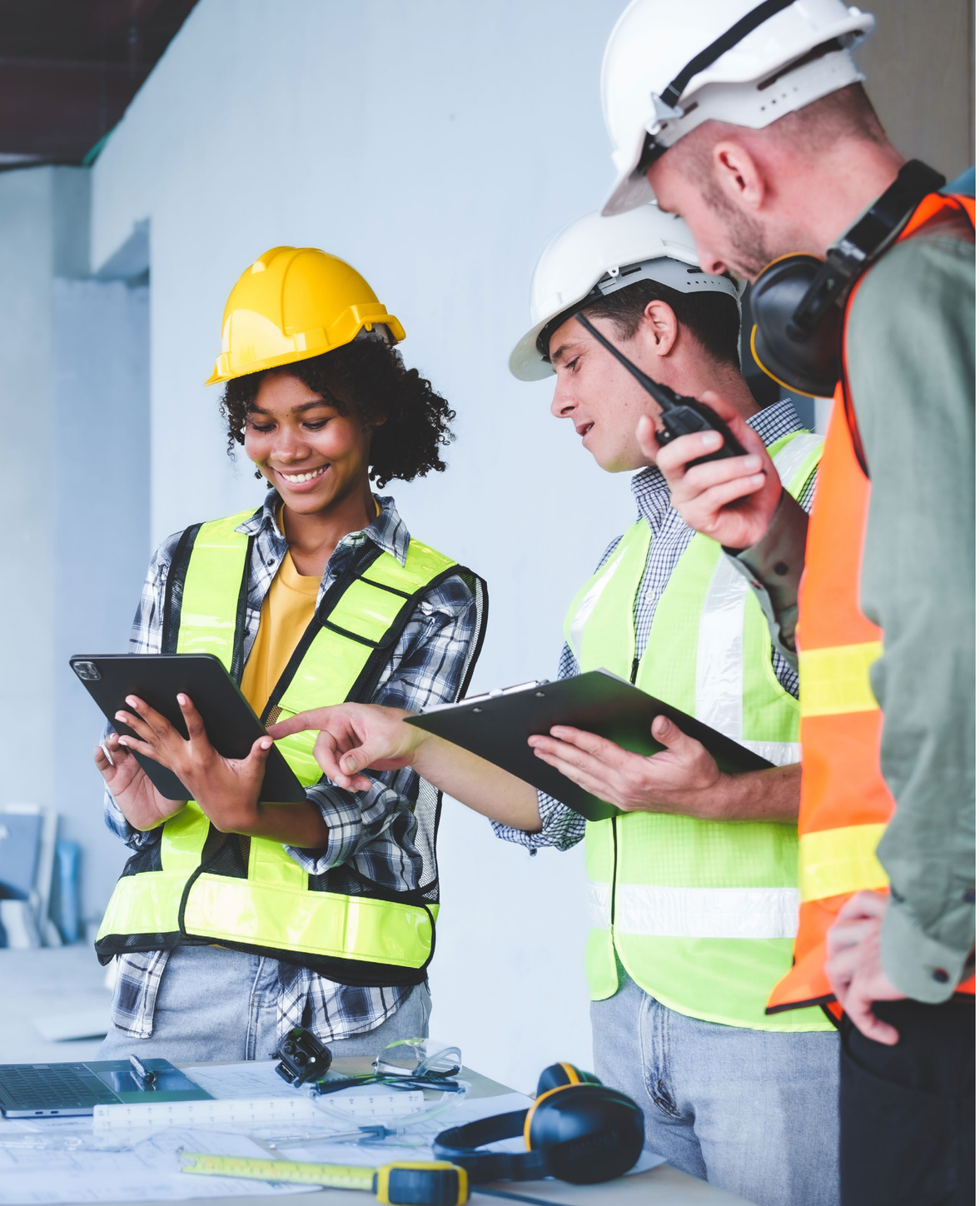
As projects become more complex, project teams must look to standardize and automate processes, configure them to specific project requirements, and capture all required data to help improve collaboration. When all parties on a project are collaborating effectively, everyone has the right information to do their job, minimizing errors and maximizing schedule efficiency.

But what is true collaboration, and how do teams know if they're effectively collaborating on projects?

True collaboration is the ability for everyone on a project team to fairly and openly exchange data to manage processes. For collaboration to be effective, all project participants need to willingly engage on the chosen technology platform. And to achieve this, no one individual or party can be able to control or manipulate what's being shared or how and when it is shared.

Without effective collaboration, projects take longer to complete because it takes longer to get individual tasks done. Projects also can experience increased errors, rework, costs, and potential litigation. Teams and processes need to be connected, and teams must have access to common data.

True collaboration is the ability for everyone on a project team to fairly and openly exchange data to manage processes.



Indicators your project team needs collaboration improvements

Project teams know that collaboration is critical to the success of any project, but challenges can make it difficult to maintain effective collaboration:

- Teams are using different systems and multiple solutions to manage projects. They are often fractured and work in isolation, which can result in communication challenges and data silos.
- Projects can get increasingly fragmented and dispersed. As projects get larger, they typically require more involvement from multiple organizations in different geographic locations that don't often communicate with one another. In many cases, not everyone has access to the project management system or has access to the same level of functionality within the system.
- Projects are generating more and more data and are getting more complicated. To make sense of the data, teams not only need a common data environment with a single data repository, they must also stay one step ahead of what's happening on projects to ensure successful project delivery.

So then, what are some of the most common collaboration challenges—and how do they impact teams and, ultimately, project success? In this ebook, we'll explore five major challenges and how you can solve them today.

Five collaboration challenges and how to fix them today

Challenge 1:

Teams don’t know if they’re working with the right information

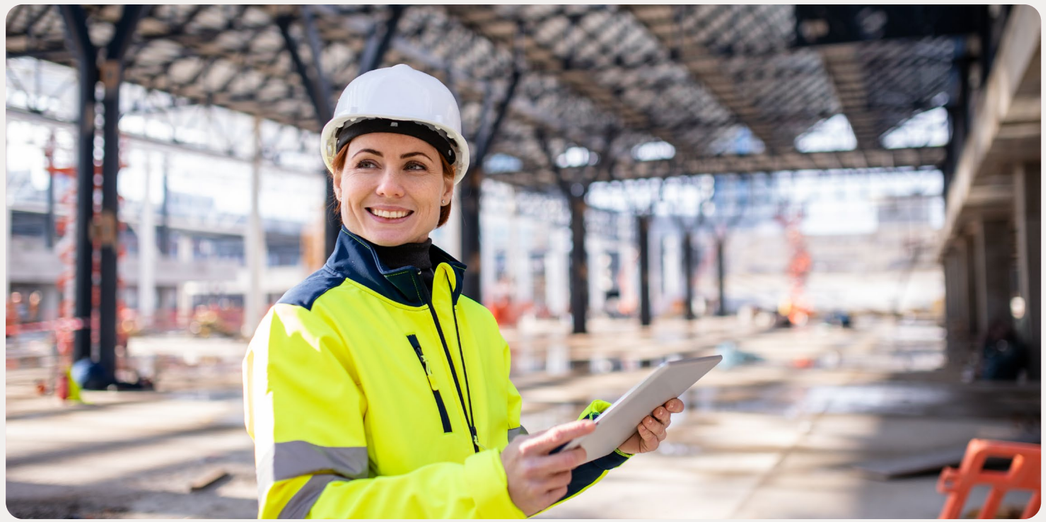
During a project, information is often stored in different locations and folders because multiple parties are on the project and there is no central data storage regime. Some of those parties may worry about losing access to their information. In response, they may store versions of the information in their own systems or may even make changes to the information without informing the other parties.

Duplication of the same data, often through different revisions and versions, may then scatter across different systems. The result is that individuals on the project don’t know if they’re working with the right information. They may have older or incorrect versions of the information, leaving all parties on the project questioning what’s accurate. Working from the wrong version of a document costs companies a lot of money.

Solution:

Use one single, shared document repository for the entire project

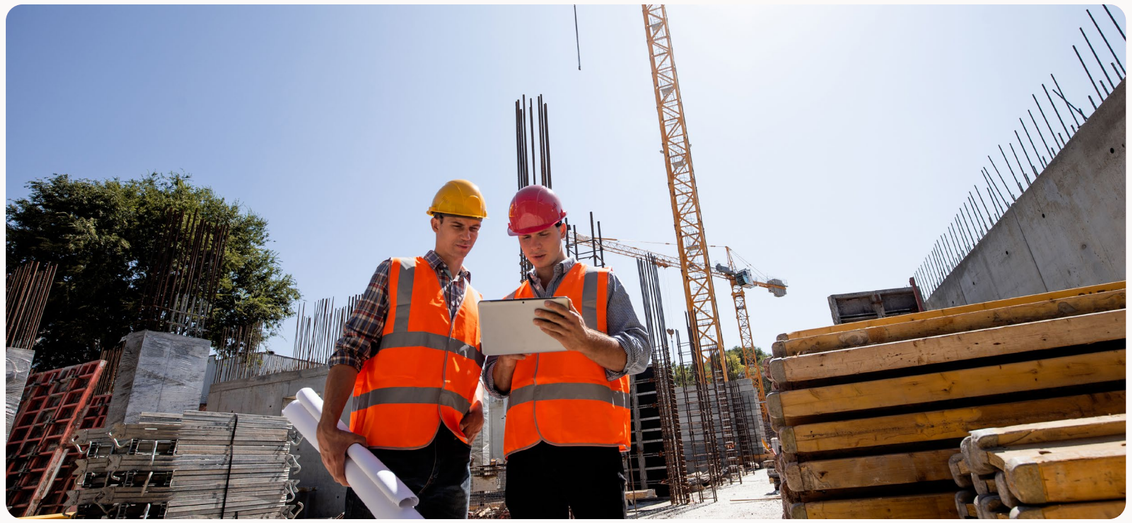
To keep project teams in the know and working from the right information at all times, they must work from a central document management solution that has features in place to limit confusion and duplicate data. By using a platform that maintains strict version and revision controls, backed by tracking and reporting, teams no longer have to worry about working from older or incorrect information arising from multiple information silos. The single source of truth keeps all parties on the same page.



Challenge 2:

Teams don’t know where to find the information they need

Project teams are often fractured, work in isolation, or experience difficulties communicating with one another. A clunky setup among teams could create data silos or duplicate data without teams even knowing that the duplicates exist. Pair that with disparate document management tools that use complex folder and filing systems for project information. The result? An impossible process for teams to find the right information at the right time.



Solution:

Use one connected system for the whole project team

When teams implement a single project management tool to manage all communication, information, and processes across the entire construction lifecycle, they can work from a unified data repository. A folderless system with full data search capabilities can eliminate the likelihood of folder or document duplication or misplacement that risks team members using outdated information. The system must be designed to work across all project organizations, and everyone must have access to the same level tools they need for their jobs. Configurable process management and data capture helps match project and process requirements, while also enabling powerful search capabilities to easily find and track all project information. Confusion is eliminated, and teams can work together more seamlessly.

Challenge 3:

When things go wrong, teams don't know how to determine why

When different parties on a project interact downstream on their own point solutions, they have a limited view of the broader interactions taking place. For example, critical RFI information needed by the subcontractor may only reside in the general contractor's point solution. The response to the RFI that the subcontractor needs from an equipment supplier or another subcontractor may only reside in the subcontractor's point solution. Many times when this type of information needs to flow back and forth across the different parties involved, there's no single tool that's allowing for all the information to be pieced all together. The lack of visibility can leave parties in the dark when something goes wrong because they don't have access to the various point solutions where critical information is located.

The information gets stored in different locations and folders with no linking of correspondence. Because there is missing communication and information, the information is put at risk of becoming altered and/or deleted.

Solution:

Use a complete, unalterable project record

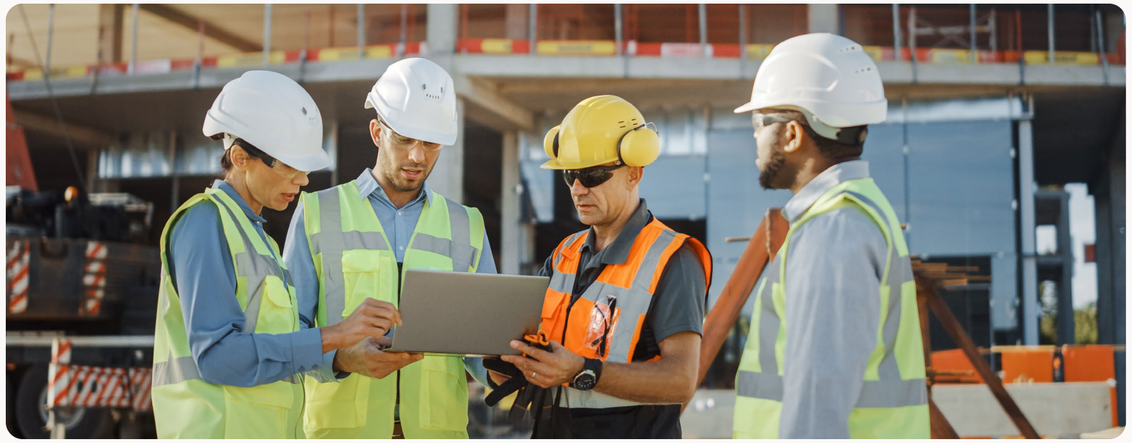
When parties across a project use a single project management tool, they can track and capture every project decision, ensuring accountability and minimizing disputes. All documents, correspondence, and decisions are captured in one system—creating a complete project record and a single source of truth. When using a tool with an unalterable audit trail, nothing can be deleted or altered post the fact. Correspondence threading links communication chains, all decisions and actions are captured, and everything is tracked and discoverable. The result? All parties maintain visibility and accountability.

When project management solutions make it possible to delete or alter information, mistakes can be more easily hidden or scrubbed from a project's record, blame can be shifted if something goes wrong, and ultimately, liability can be avoided. However, when litigation occurs, a complete record and audit trail must be relied upon to minimize disputes, thus reducing the risk of financial damages and project delays.

Challenge 4:

There's no trust in the project management system

Trust is an essential ingredient for successful collaboration. When project teams adopt a solution that gives one individual or party "super user" access and cuts others off from access completely, project participants may feel less inclined to adopt the solution because there's a lack of trust in the system and a fear of losing access to their data. Poor adoption leads to project teams using their own solutions with data duplicated and scattered across different systems. This ultimately leads to poor visibility and accountability across the project and puts the project at risk of creating data silos with data accuracy and version control issues.



Solution:

Implement a project management solution so all project organizations control their data

Project organizations can control their data by adopting a project management solution that lets everyone on the project, including the subcontractors, own their data. Each party on the project should have its own private workspace and within those private workspaces, organizations can decide who has access to information and who can transmit documents. Full data ownership builds trust and incentivizes adoption across the project, encouraging the open exchange of data, leading to true collaboration. When the whole team uses a system with an unalterable audit trail, the complete project record is captured so teams can make better decisions with full visibility and accountability.

With the right solution, individuals can't have their project access revoked. However, a participant who is invited to a project but no longer needs to contribute or add information can remain on the project but with modified capabilities. The participant's contributions can be archived, but the participant can no longer add new information or receive new information. This helps to maintain a full picture of the project and helps teams with their own risk mitigation.

Challenge 5:

Each project's processes are different

Typically project management solutions have rigid process and approval flows that don't accommodate the requirements of specific projects and project organizations. When the project management solution is not aligned to the required process and approval flows and data capture requirements, processes are not run optimally and other systems may even be used. This can cause confusion across the project and typically leads to mistakes.

Solution:

Ensure processes can be configured to reflect project team needs

By using a highly configurable process management engine, process and approval flows can be set up to suit the specific requirements of the project including the data capture requirements for individual processes. With structured correspondence and workflows, processes can be automated and standardized for consistent data capture across the project. This supports in-depth tracking and reporting so teams have full visibility and control over all project processes, while also providing the insights to help continuously improve and optimize processes.

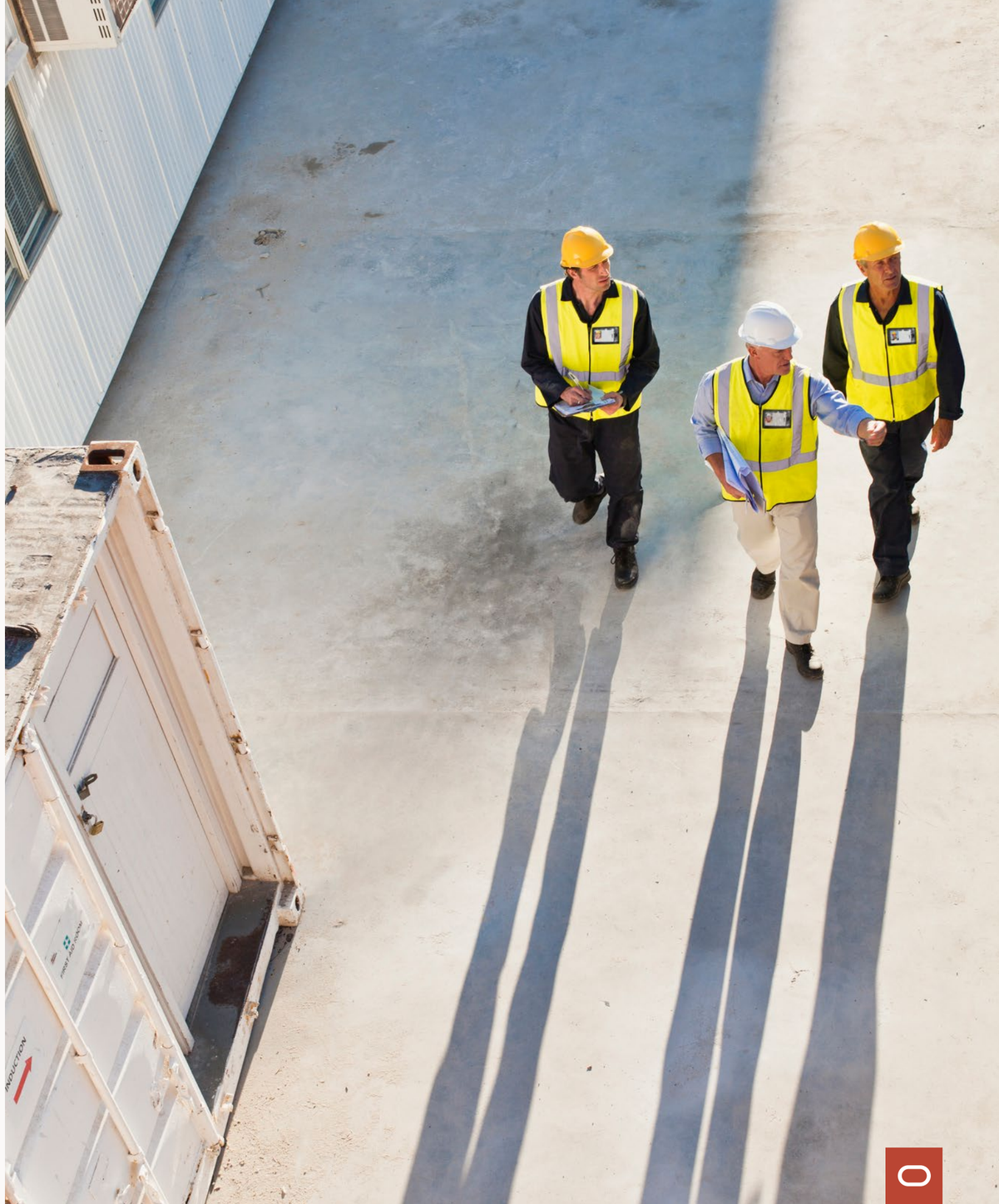
How Oracle Aconex connects teams, processes, and data for optimal project management and collaboration

Collaboration no longer has to be compromised as projects become more complex.

With the right project management solution, teams can streamline and automate processes to boost productivity and improve and collaboration. With Oracle Aconex, teams can rely on one system across the entire construction phase of their projects.

Aconex manages end-to-end processes across the entire construction lifecycle. When project teams own and control their data, barriers to collaboration are eliminated, increasing adoption and data sharing, connecting teams, and capturing a complete project record. Backed by an unalterable audit trail that minimizes disputes, Aconex keeps projects on track for successful delivery and completion.

Ready to learn more? Get started with Oracle Aconex to improve collaboration challenges today.



ORACLE

CONNECT WITH US

linkedin.com/showcase/oracle-construction-and-engineering/

facebook.com/OracleConstEng

twitter.com/OracleConstEng

blogs.oracle.com/construction-engineering/