



CUSTOMER SOLUTION CASE STUDY

IPM combines core functionality, rapid integration, and flexibility into a powerful solution for design-build construction firm.



Customer Profile: The Opus Group

Industry: Integrated design, construction, and project management company that provides real estate development, architecture, and engineering services

Location: Minnetonka, Minnesota, USA

Employees: 325

Business Situation: Opus's outdated project management software lacked core functionality and did not fit their business model. They needed a complete project management solution that was easy to use and that integrated with existing accounting, imaging, and file-sharing systems.

IPM Solution:

- IPM Project Management Software powered by Opus's existing Microsoft Dynamics CRM platform

Key Benefits:

- Rapid, cost-efficient integration with JD Edwards, other systems
- Real-time access to connected data
- Flexibility to add and extend functionality
- Improved daily reporting and field-office communications
- Better end-to-end workflow
- Powerful time-entry features



The Opus Group® is a family of commercial real estate development, construction and design companies headquartered in Minneapolis, with offices and projects across the country. Its 325 employees operate as an integrated, multidisciplinary team with expertise in development, capital markets and finance; project management and construction; architecture, engineering and interior design; sales and leasing. The company's integrated design-build model has proven results in providing both time and budget efficiencies.

The Business Situation

The Opus Group takes a collaborative approach to their projects, both within the company, and with their customers. The company's integrated design-build business model lets clients focus on their vision for the project, and enables Opus to deliver high-quality buildings on time and on budget. Unfortunately, Opus did not enjoy this same level of integration and support from their old project management solution, which lacked many core project management features and kept data isolated in disparate systems.

Instead of paying for a costly upgrade, Opus searched for a holistic project management tool that was easy to use and that could integrate with their existing systems without a lot of expense and effort. After watching a demo of a solution from IPM Global called IPM Project Management Software, executives at Opus immediately saw the possibilities. "IPM was the perfect solution. Its core features provide most of the functionality we needed, yet its flexibility allows us to build workflows or otherwise adapt it to our specific business needs," says Linda Gonzales, VP of information technology at The Opus Group.



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Key Benefits

Real-time Access to Connected Data

The Opus Group quickly and easily integrated its current systems—including JD Edwards, DocuSphere/AnyDoc, and SharePoint—with IPM software. Now, users can access all information from a single system, saving time and providing better visibility to critical information. To research costs, for instance, project managers would spend 15 to 20 minutes per invoice, using a multi-system process. IPM provides real-time access to these detailed costs from one place.

Flexibility to Adapt

IPM provides core functionality with the flexibility to adapt to specific business needs. For instance, Opus had a paper-based, cumbersome process for verifying insurance certification for subcontractors. It was a manual process to notify field supervisors if a subcontractor was in compliance and should be allowed on site. IPM's integration into the Opus's imaging software enables them to quickly see if those certifications are valid and current. "IPM provides a nice blend of core functionality with the ability to build in our own processes, making it a single solution that benefits all groups at Opus," says Corey Hansen, senior application analyst at Opus.

Integration Reduces Errors, Improves Accuracy

IPM reduces input errors and eliminates the need for manual corrections. Access to detailed information also improves reporting accuracy. Clunky integration between two previous systems left room for errors. "It was a lump-sum integration, maybe 50 transactions at a time," Mr. Hansen says, "but you couldn't break it down, which could lead to incorrect forecasting. IPM does the calculations *and* reports on those calculations. There's no chance for error."

Flexible Time Entry Enables Real-time Job Costing

Because IPM captures time for both the field and office staff, users can assign cost to account codes by job. This not only provides project managers with real-time job costing numbers, but also allows Opus to handle company-specific exception time for PTO, overtime, etc.

The IPM Solution

Opus's former IBM application required a costly, time-consuming upgrade as well as a significant amount of configuration. With IPM, however, The Opus Group was up and running quickly—within a short time all new construction projects were being entered into the system. "We implemented IPM for a fraction of the cost and in less than half the time it would have taken to upgrade our previous solution," Ms. Gonzales says.

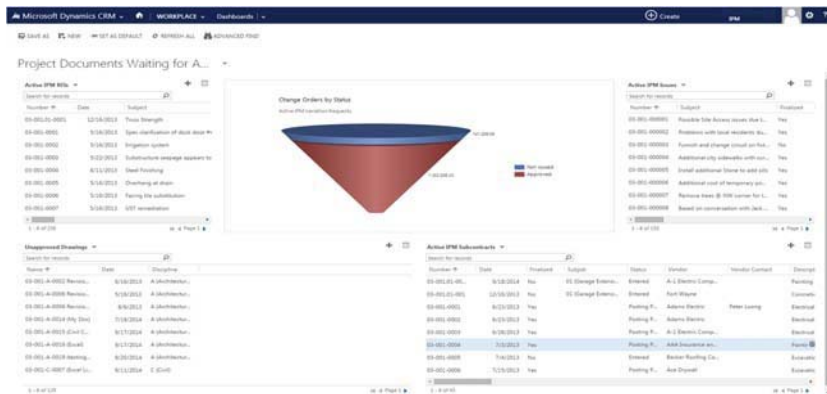
Powered by the flexible, powerful Microsoft Dynamics CRM platform, IPM software provides critical construction management features for Opus: budgeting, procurement, managing owner contracts, submittal tracking, RFIs, forecast/planning, and more. "The integration of IPM into Microsoft Dynamics CRM was ideal," says Ms. Gonzales. "We were already using it for contact and deal tracking, so installing the IPM software on the same platform started to close the project lifecycle loop." In addition, IPM's flexibility enabled easy integration with the company's other existing systems, such as accounting (JD Edwards) software, imaging software, and document library.



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Better Daily Reporting and Communications

Daily reporting and notification capabilities have improved communication between the field and office personnel. Information that was updated weekly or monthly is now available in real-time. Project managers have built notifications and dashboards around equipment usage/rentals, productivity, issues, and materials—information that the superintendent captures in IPM. This information hits the forecast so project managers have better information addressing schedule, budget, and resource issues that may need immediate attention. “IPM improves communication between project team members, and notifies project managers when action is required,” Mr. Hansen says.



Improved Workflow: End-to-End Project Management

The integration of IPM with Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides Opus with a holistic view of the project lifecycle. “We track deals and opportunities in CRM until they become signed and automatically moved into IPM as a job, where the project manager takes it to completion,” says Corey. “We can see what deals were won (and lost) for any client, and how margins, budgets, and schedules did through the project completion.”

IPM: Purpose-built for the Construction Industry

“IPM software is built by people who understand the construction business. It addresses the common needs across standard construction companies and subcontractors. Because it is built on Microsoft Dynamics CRM, IPM software also provides the flexibility to handle the specific needs of each company,” Ms. Gonzales says.



About IPM:

IPM Global specializes in developing purposefully designed software for project-related industries. The IPM Project Management software suite is built on the flexible Microsoft Dynamics CRM framework enabling easy customizations and seamless integration with Microsoft Office and a variety of back office ERP solutions such as Microsoft Dynamics, SAP, and Sage. Core features include project management, contract control, document control, resource management, job costing, planning and forecasting and mobility. IPM is available as an on-premise or cloud solution with a variety of specialized add-on capabilities to choose from.

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