

VIEWPOINT

MARK SMITH, CEO & CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER

 VENTANA RESEARCH



Work and Resource Management: A New Approach

Successful companies are able to generate the maximum value from their investments. But doing that is not necessarily easy. Balancing work efficiency and effectiveness within business areas and processes is often difficult – and in many instances growing increasingly so. Globalization, generational shifts in the workforce, the digitization of work and changes in the structure of labor have forced businesses to alter their strategies and adapt their resources to meet these challenges and seize the opportunities they present.

But while strategies and resource allocations may shift, at a more granular level the nature of work often does not. All too often work involves repetitive tasks that individuals are expected to perform without much support from technology in

“

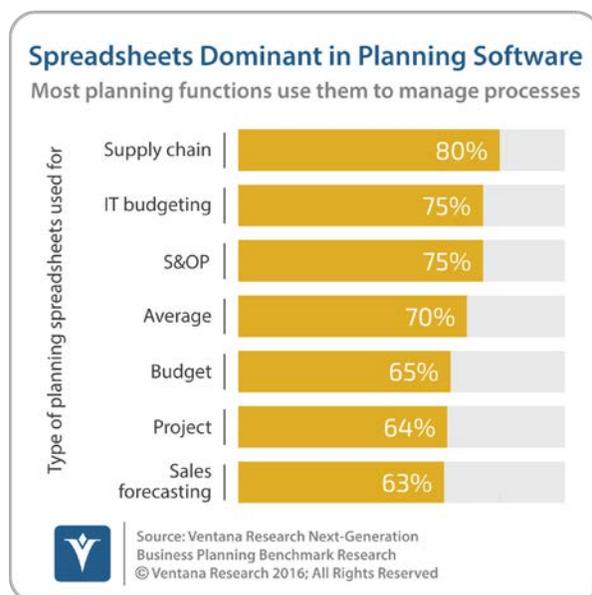
All too often work involves repetitive tasks that individuals are expected to perform without much support from technology in tracking and completing it.

tracking and completing it, let alone collaborating with other employees about it. (Fewer than half of organizations believe they are able to collaborate effectively around project planning according to our Next Generation Business Planning benchmark research.) Indeed, technology is often the problem: email messages, texts, chats and social media postings are now a constant distraction, challenging the ability of workers to focus on the tasks to which they have been assigned.

Modern business software should enable more optimal use of a company's resources to get work done. More than a decade ago, software categories such as project and portfolio management (PPM), service resource planning

(SRP) and Professional Services Automation (PSA) were built to meet specific needs and use specific methodologies like waterfall models to address work that consists of well-defined sequential tasks as well as ad hoc tasks. But these approaches are less useful for where work activities and tasks are iterative and changing on a daily and weekly basis. In these instances, the lack of a useful framework can mean that steps may be missed and the completion of tasks may not be credited to the individuals completing the work. It should be no surprise that our research finds that more than half of organizations find their project plans less than accurate.

In addition to being able to manage more ad hoc and unstructured activities, businesses need to be able to see and manage activities across functional and organizational silos. When information about tasks and activities is not integrated the organization cannot monitor and manage the state of work; a third of organizations depend on this data to be able to know accurately what resources have accomplished. They also need to be able integrate, for example, financial information from back office systems and customer and contract information from front office systems into systems that manage business tasks. Using spreadsheets is not a best practice, even though they are used in almost two-thirds of organizations for project-related planning, as they are not designed for use in business-wide processes.



The work and resources of an organization should not be constrained by the boundaries of project-centric work approaches; nor should they be unstructured to the point that they are not aligned with the needs of the business's processes or the expected outcomes of the line-of-business units. Organizations should have the capability to plan and define activities and tasks – they should know the available capacity of their resources, which encompasses not just people but also manufacturing and the customer distribution potential of their retail locations. Also, organizations should be nimble, able to shift priorities, address issues and task resources to get them completed in an acceptable time window. And they should have available an application that can provide a unified view of work and resources rather than being constrained or complicated by a myriad of applications not designed for this essential element.

We at Ventana Research are defining a new business technology focus called "Work and Resource Management," that explores the use of dedicated software and technology to support continuous organizational optimization. It looks at work that is assigned and conducted by resources that may be people-, technology- or asset-based and that that can be located anywhere in the organization or be geographically dispersed. The support for this work spans formalized project management and the informal organization of tasks and activities, workflow and notification, with the mix designed to accomplish what is expected by the organization. Managing project planning processes is an essential part of this focus, which is needed as fewer than half (46%) of organizations manage projects well or very well and only a little more than half (57%) are satisfied with current planning processes.

Ventana Research, Inc.
Bend, Oregon, USA
541-940-1010
info@ventanaresearch.com

www.ventanaresearch.com

© 2016 Ventana Research

Work and resource management, from definition to execution, must be designed to support the organization's priorities and for optimal utilization of resources, skills and expertise. Work and resource management should ensure that the portfolio of all resources can be utilized to support the business and IT priorities of the organization, including where mobility and collaboration are required to support how work is conducted.



Collaboration is a key element of this new approach; 85 percent of organizations found that when collaboration is effective or very effective the planning processes is managed well.

Organizations are faced with the reality that they have dozens of business applications to track and manage work and resources, complicating processes that would be simpler with a unified approach. They need to be able to assess, analyze and utilize the complete portfolio of resources to be able to plan to gain the highest level of return. Costs and work and resource allocation should

be easily assessed to determine financial value and impact and also to be able to allocate them to support the priorities of the organization. In other words, organizations should be able to plan and forecast and even ultimately predict the likelihood that resources will be able to complete any range of tasks, activities and projects assigned.

From the strategic to the operational level, work and resource management provides executives and managers with the methods and tools to define, collaborate, document, plan and execute to ensure the full utilization and performance from the entire portfolio of work and resources. Having a dedicated software approach to manage the work life cycle and use of resources is becoming an imperative for organizations; it will reduce the chaos of work distractions and ensure work can be conducted and tracked toward objectives. Without such an approach, organizations increasingly will find themselves without the ability to act and respond as needed and will find themselves unable to ensure the change and "continuous optimization" that is needed to achieve the level of results required in the timeframe expected.

Mark Smith is the CEO and Chief Research Officer at Ventana Research. Mark is an expert in enterprise software and business technology innovations including: business analytics, big data, cloud computing, business collaboration, Internet of Things, mobile technology, social media and wearable computing. For more insights by Mark Smith, see <https://marksmith.ventanaresearch.com>.

Ventana Research, Inc.
Bend, Oregon, USA
541-940-1010
info@ventanaresearch.com

www.ventanaresearch.com

© 2016 Ventana Research