

Fact Sheet : Programme Management – Added Value

The delivery of major programmes for retail clients is a complex and demanding process. This factsheet has been prepared to highlight the elements of added value that activeplan Consulting can bring to the most critical delivery aspects of these programmes - to simplify, streamline and improve the efficiency of the overarching process, whilst delivering greater value to clients, stakeholders and end users alike.

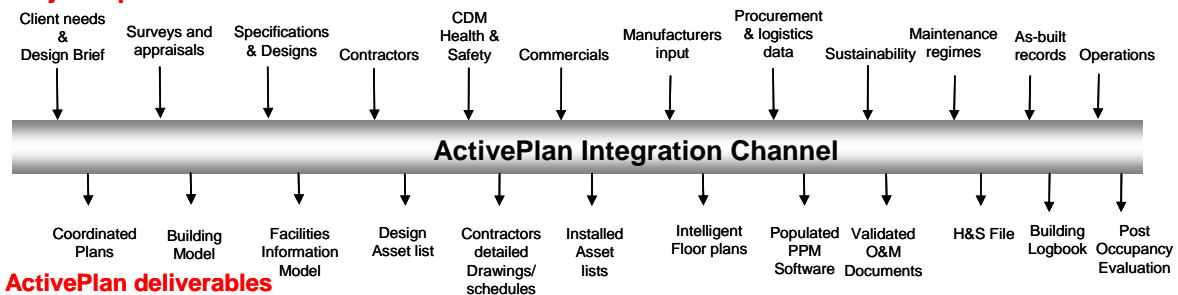
Introduction to activeplan Consulting

Activeplan Consulting is all about ‘making the connection’ and drawing things together. A strategic alliance which enables activeplan product development to deliver enhanced software features, functionality and effectiveness, combined with specialist Consultancy services which provide a blend of diagnostic and analytical skills to determine and interpret Customer and user needs, and pragmatic practical applications experience

Activeplan

Activeplan is an integrated relational database (software) application capable of concurrently handling graphical data (eg store survey or layout drawings) and non-graphical data (eg asbestos reports, equipment specifications). It is designed to provide excellent visibility of “fixtures” in their “spatial context”, i.e. assets, utilities, components in relation to each other and to specific points of reference (origin). What this means in practice is that activeplan can operate as a “data integration channel”, acting as the “glue” between many different software applications – providing a fast and reliable medium through which information can be exchanged and shared.

Project inputs



Programme Elements where activeplan Consulting can add value

Data Integration and consolidation

Often, information regarding stores and branches, and the fixtures, fittings and equipment – including survey and layout drawings, condition reports, asbestos reports, FM database, etc - is maintained by different departments, in different formats, with differing store references. The simple ability of consolidating all this information (by taking it in its raw format) into one model for each store or branch, via the activeplan Integration Channel, brings clarity and visibility and can remove the need for duplicated surveys etc. – ultimately providing a true basis for future briefing and design development. This process will also assist in stakeholder engagement and management. The design details are added to the model, resulting in all elements relating to an individual store (existing, proposed, as-built) being captured through one model ('one version of the truth').

Deriving the standard specification

The starting point for the majority of programmes is to define the standard specification for the projects to be delivered, to ensure the brand requirements are to be met whilst providing affordability. Our solution enables the specification to be captured as a benchmark and all subsequent scheme proposals automatically generated from it, and compared to it, to show (by exception) the variations – a key aspect to managing client expectations. The specification can be managed and co-ordinated centrally – hence wholesale revisions to any element (eg light fittings) can be applied once to the entire programme (via the store models), as opposed to separately to individual projects. This also enables optioneering at a programme level to determine impacts of revised specification in terms of affordability, and consistency of information presentation and structure from store to store – regardless of the individual team structures.

Business Case development

Drawing upon the above specification, the overall development and affordability of the programme can be gauged as part of the development of the business case – our solution enables options to be quickly and simply explored (eg changes to finishes, equipment, fittings, etc) to gauge the impact across the programme, giving true visibility of impact and enabling objective decision making. Value engineering is intrinsically linked to brand requirements (derived from the specification) and overarching programme reviews showing exceptions can be easily prepared. Stakeholder management and engagement can be mapped and recorded, demonstrating acceptance and buy-in from all required signatories to the programme. The compliance with the agreed business case (at every level – from individual elements (eg equipment) to project to overall programme) can be constantly reviewed through the development and delivery phases – providing a true measure of delivery to agreed and approved objectives.

Ease of access

The models for every store are maintained centrally and accessed via a portal – using password control to limit the user access rights as required. Hence, the client could be enabled to see all the programme elements, whereas an individual designer could be limited to the projects they are appointed on. The portal access gives the ability to run simple and definitive user defined reports against the data – eg where there are exceptions to the standard specification, location of specific items of equipment, areas of specific finish, etc. The system is not simply for document management, it is for data integration – hence the information is always current, accurate and consolidated.

Briefing and client approval

The standard specification forms the starting point for each project and variations are captured through the briefing process – the departures to the agreed standard can be simply and quickly articulated and objective decisions made as to their treatment. The design proposals for each store or branch are added to the respective models and the overarching programme details are hence automatically updated – which in turn can be used to ensure compliance with the agreed business case. Once the design information has been developed, simple 3D visualisations can be generated automatically to help all stakeholders view and review the design proposals, giving the ability to secure approval or agree revisions before starting on site. This could be used initially to develop the standard specification, then on a store by store basis to review the implementation of the brand requirements. This mechanism would also greatly assist in engaging the store or branch teams and securing their approval and understanding of the proposals – often very difficult to articulate in 2D. There is also the ability to ascribe programme durations and start/end dates to elements, hence phasing diagrams for complex projects can be generated, reviewed and agreed utilising the proposed design information.

Construction and Production information

Once the design has been finalised and approved, the production information can be prepared – again drawing from a single source of information (spanning both programme and project levels) to ensure consistency with the approved details for the project itself and the agreed overarching specifications etc. The activeplan Integration Channel acts as a collaboration tool as well, enabling contractor proposals to be submitted for review and approval, and room data sheets to be prepared automatically from the model database. The model for each project will benefit from the integration of all related information – eg the asbestos report for a building can be integrated with the model and used to highlight on a room by room basis the requirements for removal/treatment. This ensures a full and complete understanding of the project requirements is generated within the production information, reducing uncertainty which can often result in delays and associated claims.

Operational Readiness

The key drive for any programme is to minimise the impact on the delivery of services to the end customer, whilst maximising the efficiency of delivery and readiness to operate the new facility. Any impact upon opening dates or efficiency of service can have a real reputational impact, resulting in loss of trade or patronage from end customers. By developing an Operational Management Plan for the store or facility, and integrating this with the workflow process for delivery of the project (all via the activeplan Integration Channel) will ensure that the operational critical issues are all flagged and addressed. Commissioning of plant and equipment is key, but so is proper training and engagement of staff who will ultimately be responsible for it. With complex phasing on projects, temporary and permanent situations must be planned and catered for – often involving complex decant requirements. Service delivery critical approvals (statutory or regulatory) all need to be an intrinsic part of the process, to ensure that project delivery and service delivery are mutually supportive.

O&M Documentation

The provision of consolidated O&M information can often prove to be a complicated and frustrating process for clients, despite the required contractual obligations being confirmed from the project outset. By adopting the activeplan software, this information starts to be generated from the very commencement of a project, with manuals etc being attributed directly to equipment via the system, together with details such as cleaning and maintenance routines, and photos taken at handover and linked to the item in question. Maintenance schedules can be automatically generated and the client has the ability to review information at project and programme level – eg if there is an issue with a piece of equipment in one store, where else has it been used? The activeplan 'Facilities Information Model' provides the client with an enhanced O&M application with validated and easily retrieved data, integrated with H&S, Building Log Book and planned and preventative maintenance.