



User Adoption vs Technology Capabilities

Which is More Important?



“Although technology should make tasks faster and easier, it doesn’t always succeed ... many organizations are actually watching their operations slow down due to underutilization of technology.”

[A Forbes.com article about driving user adoption](#)



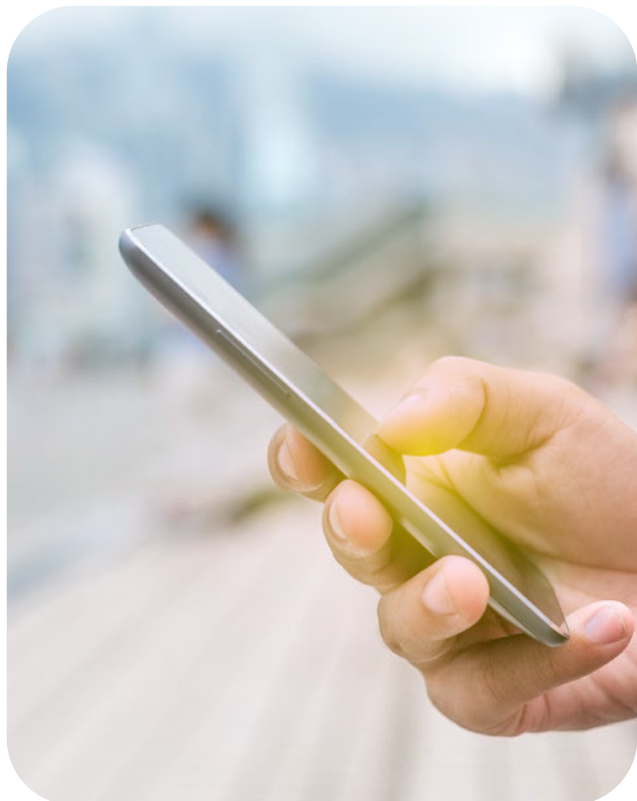
Change is constant on a construction project by nature. You start with little or nothing and build something tangible. Changes to the plan occur along the way because of unforeseen conditions, acts of nature or regulatory shifts. But piece by piece, block by block and day by day, a project gets closer to completion. When completed, the next adventure begins.

When it comes to changing how we use technology, our industry was historically a laggard but has been making great progress over the years. Like no other time in history, the construction industry is adopting new technology to address rapid global changes. Consider the increased use of wearable technology, integrated project management information systems (PMIS), video conferencing and the migration of digital assets to the cloud. Each of these has seen rapid growth and acceptance over the last two years.

Technology is delivering efficiencies to projects that a decade ago we could never imagine. But new does not always mean easy.

Which of these technological advancements will have the best staying power in the construction industry? A quick search will find articles written by every major consulting firm predicting which new technology is likely to stand the test of time. Some of these will quickly be replaced by even newer, better tech. This is especially true of "hard" tech like equipment or hardware. Likely candidates include exoskeletons that assist in lifting or repeated motions, drones, robots and tracking devices.





The “soft” side of technology – such as software or platform cloud data warehousing – will continue to evolve. The single overriding success factor to long-term viability of soft technology is adoption, especially when it comes to enterprise software technology, such as Kahua’s PMIS platform. The cost or schedule of implementing a new technology is inconsequential if the technology isn’t used.

Software implementations fail for a few reasons:

- The vendor-built software does not fit the way the user organization works.
- The deployment is too complex and requires more work than the organization expected.
- The project fails to get buy-in at multiple levels.

For a PMIS solution to avoid these pitfalls and stand the test of time, it must be flexible and agile. Your organization must adapt to external conditions that force change. Therefore, your PMIS must be able to do the same. Before considering examples, let’s define the terms of **flexible** and **agile**.

Flexible - Capable of Bending Easily Without Breaking

Being a flexible PMIS means your team does not have to learn new terminology to accomplish your company’s standard business processes. You can continue to speak the same language. And you don’t have to change those processes to accommodate the way your vendor created its software. No executive wants to continually hear that the software the company is paying for is “too hard to use” or “takes longer to complete.” Having this kind of “flexibility” is a must!

Staying consistent with your internal nomenclature is a major milestone in software acceptance, and having a PMIS that is configurable by the user organization should be a requirement. This means you can call it a Change Order Request, Request for Change, a Required Budget Adjustment or whatever you choose. In addition, the following should conform to your business out of the box without lengthy and costly customization:

- Multiple languages
- Multiple currencies
- Multiple cost code structures

Your PMIS platform should work the way you work, not require you to work the way it was designed. When software works the way end-users expect it to work, they tend to embrace the change.

You can avoid being overwhelmed by software implementation if you implement it in a way that provides value early in the process. If your PMIS is flexible, you will be able to accomplish a long-term plan in as many phases as you need. Some organizations choose to go from zero to 100 without stopping. All gas, no brakes. But most will need to show incremental improvement and demonstrate value in stages.

This is helpful at all levels. End-users see an incremental improvement in their everyday work, which encourages greater adoption by others. Greater adoption amplifies the value provided to the organization. Demonstrated victories allow management to continue pushing towards the ultimate goal.

Agile - Able to Move Quickly and Easily

If flexible means bending (changing) without breaking, then to be agile means to do so quickly and easily. Traditional software solutions from giants like IBM and Oracle have always been considered flexible. You can make them do just about anything you want. These options are very expensive, but if you are willing to pay the price, you can have a system that closely matches your current work environment and processes.

However, if you want to make changes to your deployment of these giant solutions, think in terms of years, not days or weeks. These tools may be flexible, but they are not at all agile.

It is important when choosing a PMIS today that you understand the “platform” it was developed on. This will immediately tell you how agile it is.

Why is this important?

- What if you move your business into a new territory where regulations require a new permit process or some other additional business process?
- New regulatory rules or governance has come down on how things need to be done and approved.
- A second entity that wants to leverage the same PMIS might have a different cost structure but still needs to be managed under a single portfolio of projects.
- You want to innovate and streamline a process.

It all comes down to these few truths ...

- No software has any value if it is not used. Conversely, the more it is used, the more value it offers.
- Deploying PMIS software across an enterprise need not be an all or nothing proposition. Incremental value can be gained in a phased deployment.
- Rapid change in the construction industry demands that a long-term software investment also accommodates rapid change.
- Adoption of software hinges on comfort and familiarity. End-users will embrace tools that work as expected and improve the outcome of the work. Kahua offers the most flexible solution available.

Continuous improvement is a key driver for scaling your capital portfolio. As an owner, you want to leverage the latest software technologies that enable and support future growth.

To learn how Kahua can help propel your projects forward into the future contact us at connect@kahua.com or request a demo today!

