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Best Project Management Software for Architects: Our Best Advice and Top Picks

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In this article, you will learn...

- Why you should consider adopting project management software
- How to select the right project management tools for your firm
- Options on top-rated project management software tools for architects

Are you among the many architects still using Excel to manage projects? If so, you're not alone. Plenty of architectural firms (and construction companies) use Excel for project management. Yet according to the [37th Annual Deltek Clarity Architecture and Engineering Industry Study](#), 43 percent of surveyed firms indicated poorly executed project management procedures were a leading cause of projects going over budget. Why then aren't more architectural firms employing more seamless project management solutions?

At [Cultured Stone](#), we've worked with many architects and home builders who lean heavily on project management software to support their speed, efficiency, and profitability. (Speaking of which, check out our blog post on [8 project management tips to stay on time and profitable](#).)

The reason so many firms rely on Excel are manifold. Architectural firms can't find software that seamlessly integrates with existing accounting systems or processes. They find it hard to justify the expenditure of funds (and time) in implementing the software—both the initial purchase and ongoing updates as well as training employees. And some firms see themselves as too niche for off-the-shelf software to provide the tools they need.

Related Reading: Architectural Trends: [Looking Back and Predictions for 2018](#)

Reasons to Consider Project Management Software



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- **Ease.** Excel spreadsheets have a lot of capabilities, but you really need an expert to manipulate them effectively. There's a pretty high learning curve for proficiency in Excel when it comes to estimating project costs.
 - **Automation.** An Excel solution is only as good as the person using it. Human error has its costs, and one inaccurate entry could turn into a mistake worth tens of thousands of dollars (maybe more).
 - **Consistency.** Project management software allows for standardization of processes, which could save countless man hours in your firm. It also reduces the need for data entry where numbers are always the same. Project management systems will maintain a historical record, too, so you can more easily evaluate, price, and plan projects similar to those you've completed in the past.

Questions to Ask Before You Invest

As you evaluate project management software, here are some key questions to help you choose the right option for your firm:

- Will the software make work easier and offer real-time project management?
- Does the software have a reputation for accuracy, and will it improve tracking and accountability?
- Can the project management software be integrated with other tools you are using like your accounting or estimating software?
- What is the total cost of software ownership? How is it licensed? Traditional license with annual support or periodic subscription? Is it available on the cloud so that updates are continuous as opposed to having to upgrade the



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- Is the system accessible via mobile devices so your team can use it in the field?



Top Picks for Project Management for Architects

Keep the above questions in mind as you investigate project management tools for your firm. Meanwhile, here are some of our top picks for project management software for architects:

- **BQE Core**: Formerly known as ArchiOffice, BQE Core is a project management tool designed for architects with the goal of automating and increasing efficiencies on administrative tasks like document management, time tracking, and invoicing. Core puts all these pieces in one place and also has endless options for customization, making it especially ideal for niche firms that struggle to find off-the-shelf tools that meet their needs. Another big advantage? It has integrations for RFIs and ASIs built into it.



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- working on large projects with multiple team members and many moving parts. It's an ideal solution for large firms, not so much for smaller players in the field, and it doesn't have the most intuitive interface, so it will involve a learning curve.
- **Monday.com**: While not designed exclusively for architectural firms, Monday.com does stand up well as an architecture software tool because of its proposal, document, and client management features. It offers budget management, time tracking, and task tracking and offers an intuitive and easy-to-learn interface that makes it more user-friendly than many project management tools. It also integrates well with tools like Google Drive, Dropbox, and Excel. Architects give Monday.com high marks for its mobile platform, which mirrors the desktop experience almost precisely, making it easy to use in the field and on the go without an additional learning curve.
 - **Deltek Ajera**: Both a project management system and accounting tool built specifically for architects and engineers, Deltek Ajera offers a two-in-one solution for firms that may be looking for a fully integrated product to replace both Excel and current accounting software. Because project reporting is fully integrated with your firm's financial information, this software can increase efficiencies when it comes not just to time tracking and invoicing but also long-term strategic planning. The software offers mobile timesheets and expense reporting, too, making it efficient and easy-to-use for project architects on job sites.
 - **WorkflowMax**: Though not developed exclusively for architects, WorkflowMax offers an all-in-one project management tool across an array of professional services. It offers contract, proposal, and document management. Additionally, it provides budget and resource management, collaboration tools, and time and task management. Among its standout features is its customizable project forecasting tool, which allows firms to track time by a single project or by multiple phases within a project. WorkflowMax, however, does not offer Gantt Charts and Kanban Boards.



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Architects report a tricky search function, lack of sufficient customization, and a difficult-to-learn interface. But many firms give it high ratings for tracking submittals, RFIs, and drawings.

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Regardless of the project management tool you select, the more you can automate functions and standardize and integrate processes, the more time you'll have for work that builds your firm's bottom line.

For more help with project success, download our free [Client Onboarding Questionnaire](#). Cultured Stone also offers an array of online resources to help you better manage projects and serve your clients, including consulting on the [installation of manufactured stone veneer](#).

For more tips on managing the home building process, download Cultured Stone's ["Are You Ready to Start"](#)