How Structure Tone Organization is building Philadelphia's largest building

General Contractor | Structure Tone Organization | Case Study

Comcast Technology Center will be Philadelphia's largest building, with 44 floors of office space, a Four Seasons Hotel, and two restaurants — all housed in one skyscraper. The $1.2 billion project has been taken on by L.F. Driscoll, a subsidiary of Structure Tone Organization (#17 on the 2016 ENR 400). Currently, they are mid-construction and expect to close out by early 2018, and have universally adopted PlanGrid for its plan management and accessibility in the field.

Problem

Back in 2013, Structure Tone Organization started a search for a complete field solution. Their intent was to improve their document management and punchlist processes. The superintendents and field staff were spending 50% of their day in the jobsite trailer and/or the office due to paperwork. This meant that 3-4 hours of their day were being taken up with tasks other than building.

The firm had other software in place for project management and drawing edits, but they needed something with simple mobile usability. The trailer-time problem persisted until they found PlanGrid.

> *Three to four hours of their day were being taken up with tasks other than building.*
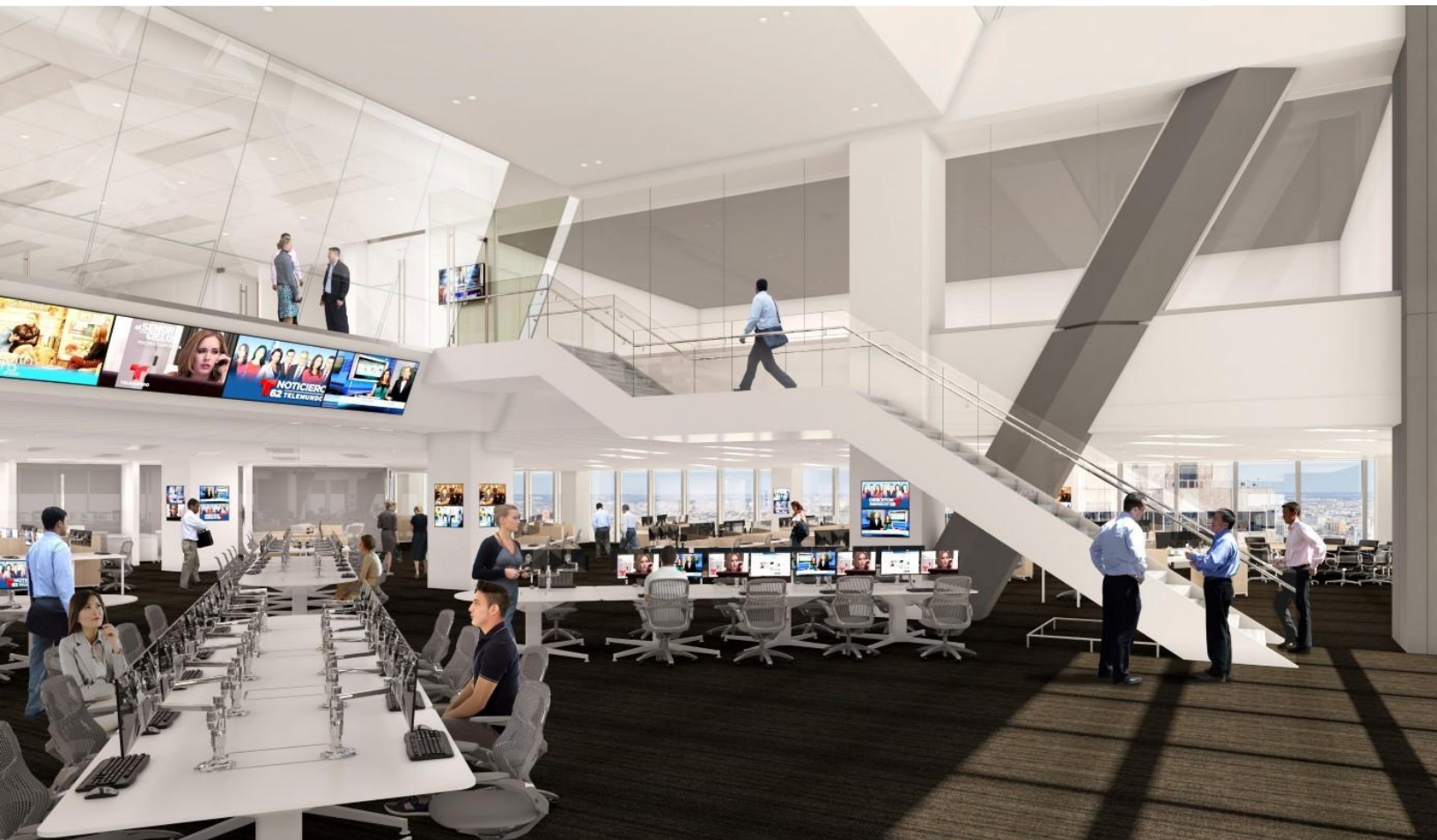
Solution

PlanGrid was the perfect complementary field tool. The company uses the app to distribute drawings to jobsites, view plans onsite, and assign/complete punchlists. PlanGrid is also their central hub for all project documents in the form of attachments. RFI's, submittals, schedules, and reports for consultants are attached to their PlanGrid projects for easy mobile access and instant references.

Structure Tone Organization has now secured several aspects of their field operations. The company feels confident that their field always has the current set of drawings. Hyperlinked RFI's ensure they can pull up the latest information from anywhere, plus, they can view approved submittals without having to switch applications or flip through pages. This successful field workflow has been swiftly adopted by each company, but it did not happen overnight.

"We had to come up with a solution to get the guys back out in the field."

–**Michael Donaghy,** Manager of IT Field Systems

Implementation and usage

Structure Tone Organization has been a PlanGrid fan for years, as it has become a crucial tool for all of the company's projects. After discovering its upside, this enterprise has created one of the most successful company-wide PlanGrid implementations to date.

Originally, one of Structure Tone Organization's project managers saw PlanGrid in an Apple keynote speech and spread the word. The company thought it was worth a shot, so they started off with a 25-person pilot project in New York. They planned the test very carefully to make sure the app was worthy of further pursuit.

The firm picked a range of users, from younger staff to 30-year construction vets, then surveyed the group prior to the project, and 3 and 6 months into the project. Even from non-tech-savvy users, the company recorded unanimous raves, which quickly grabbed the attention of the executive team.

The executives gave the go-ahead to standardize PlanGrid as the company's field tool. The company set up in-house training, teaching employees the uploading and web functions, then the mobile app. They even created webinar-style training for other regional offices. With each, the team could fully train field staff groups of 15-20 people within 90 minutes. Usage grew organically from there.

The enterprise now builds roughly 2,000 projects per year, most of which have a fully-operational PlanGrid workflow. Structure Tone Organization has developed an internal Operations Technology Group — a 15-20 person team of PlanGrid power-users that ensures each office's rollout is successful. This team stays in close contact with PlanGrid to recommend improvements to the software. The enterprise has also purchased PlanGrid on specific projects for their owners and design team to ensure collaboration on specific workflows such as punchlists and blueprint markups.

Results

PlanGrid has now been used across Structure Tone Organization on more than 4,000 projects. After three months of the initial pilot, the users were already saving three hours per day. These results have been replicated time and time again across the org. Now, subs, owners and consultants are collaborating on their PlanGrid projects as well.

PlanGrid has also had a significant impact on their printing budget. Although they still keep one paper set of plans in the trailer, its importance has been severely minimized. In addition, the working relationship with the app has been key: their internal team has made recommendations to PlanGrid, and PlanGrid has updated features as a result.

The company continues to improve its processes as additional PlanGrid features are released, most recently leveraging the product to better assist in RFI management beyond document attachments. They are also working with Plangrid and their other software partners to evaluate integrating data amongst their systems to reduce data entry, and create a greater value proposition for all of their staff across their application ecosystem. To ensure everyone is getting the full benefit out of PlanGrid, Structure Tone Organization also has initiatives to experiment with different training approaches.

Project managers, superintendents, engineers, operations managers and executives are all using the app as needed. Anybody that can benefit gets a license, since PlanGrid has proven itself as a provider of total efficiency. The company continues to build record-breaking structures, like their newest Philadelphia skyscraper, and they always bring PlanGrid to assist.

15 hours per week saved by users

so they can continue building record-breaking structures at record speeds.

Used company-wide on 4,000+ projects

across over 900 users in collaboration with owners, subcontractors, and consultants.

Continued improvement of company processes

through PlanGrid partner integrations, product updates, and new training approaches.

PlanGrid

"*If guys in the field are giving positive feedback, it speaks volumes. It's difficult to get that kind of positive feedback.*"

–**Michael Donaghy**, Manager of IT Field Systems