

Plangrid Underpins Philosophy of Positive Collaboration at Righetti Partner Group

Righetti Partner Group (RPG) is a construction management firm based in Zurich and Berne, Switzerland that specialises in all aspects of the build lifecycle. Founded in 2010, RPG has thrived through a philosophy of effective collaboration and long-standing partnerships. With a team of twenty employees, the organisation has built everything from houses and office blocks to banks and museums.



The problem

RPG manages a wide range of complex projects, which frequently focus on reconstruction. The company is built on the principle of close collaboration and excellent relationships with subcontractors, partners and of course their customers. Ensuring that everyone has ready access to the right information at the right time is key to the business.

Yvonne Schroeder is a Partner at RPG. She recalls that previously the business had relied on a paper-based document management system, with hundreds of plans and drawings printed out for each project team to use on-site. Reports and annotations were filled in by hand, with site managers then returning to the office to enter information into Excel spreadsheets and send it to the team manually.

As Yvonne remembers, with so much paper it was very difficult to locate individual documents during jobs: "You often ended up having the wrong one to hand." Version control was a serious challenge, as there was often a risk of work being completed from outdated plans. Completing quality and construction site reports for clients was a lengthy and tedious process for site managers. As Yvonne notes, "The bigger the site, the larger the problem."

Establishing a common issue management process throughout the construction team was a particular challenge for RPG, especially with a rising number of specialist planners involved in projects. "We would observe problems on the site ourselves and then specialist planners would highlight separate issues," Yvonne recalls. "In addition, you would have clients making site visits and reporting different things to us, which could in fact be where work was still at an intermediate stage, and not an issue at all."

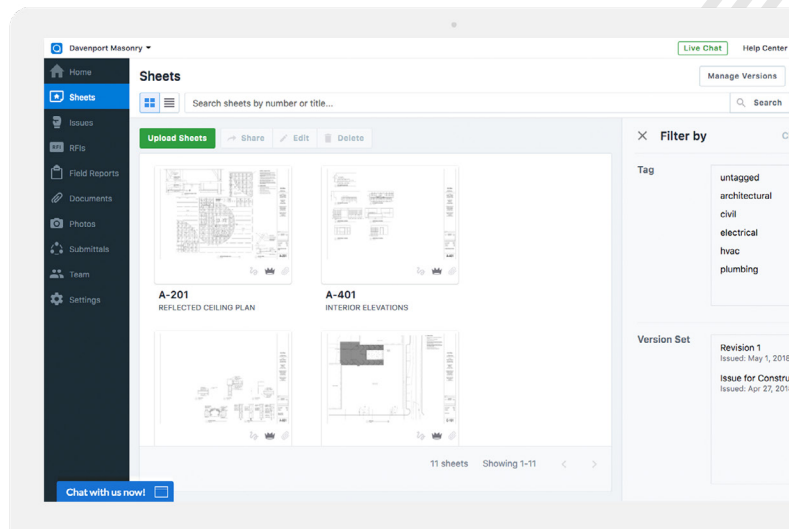
Everyone was reporting separate observations through different media, from Excel sheets to email lists. It was then the arduous task of the site manager to consolidate these reports and determine where remedial action needed to be taken and by whom. Once repairs had been completed, there was no easy way for subcontractors to inform the manager. "Issue management was difficult to the point of being redundant," recalls Yvonne.

Without a central source of truth, it was very time consuming to reconcile any disputes, which risked unnecessary strain to the business' highly valued relationships. This was an ongoing source of frustration and everyone was keen to explore a new way of working.

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"The biggest issue with the paper-based system was the document management. You often ended up having the wrong document to hand and it was really challenging to make sure that everyone was building from the right index of a drawing. Digital drawings make it so much faster and easier to share updates with the team."

— Yvonne Schroeder
Partner, Righetti Partner Group



The solution

RPG had already decided to deploy tablets throughout the team as an alternative to using physical documents on-site. Like many construction companies, Yvonne noted that the team was keen to use digital tools to make their working lives easier. This opened up new possibilities to use technology to improve outdated processes.

On a trip to the United States, the company's CEO visited a number of construction sites using specialist construction software, PlanGrid. On further investigation, the leadership team was particularly attracted by the platform's issues management function, which enabled users to mark issues directly onto digital plans along with any questions or comments. The cloud-based solution also meant that plans and drawings could be kept up to date on everyone's mobile devices.

RPG first used PlanGrid for a reconstruction project in 2014 when the company managed the redevelopment of a 1960s building into a mixture of retail outlets, offices and apartments. Yvonne recalls that the implementation was very straightforward, and the team found the platform easy to use, so the tool was adopted quickly.

During the first project the major benefit of PlanGrid was within issues management. Subcontractors and partners found it extremely helpful to have all relevant information centralised on one platform; everyone could see where any issues were and had real time access to their status. It was a seamless process for subcontractors to upload photos when repair work was completed to facilitate project sign off.

Meanwhile, establishing a single source of truth helped Yvonne and her team to share information and removed much of the guesswork across project stakeholders from the office and on project sites. The whole team could easily access the latest plans and use them on-site, even without internet access.

"We found out just how much could be done through PlanGrid," recalls Yvonne. "The sheet compare function was another tool that we appreciated." Previously, light tables were used to highlight any changes to plans over time, but with sheet compare, site managers were able to look at two superimposed plans and easily track any updates. Across the board, site managers saw a dramatic reduction in their administrative burden.

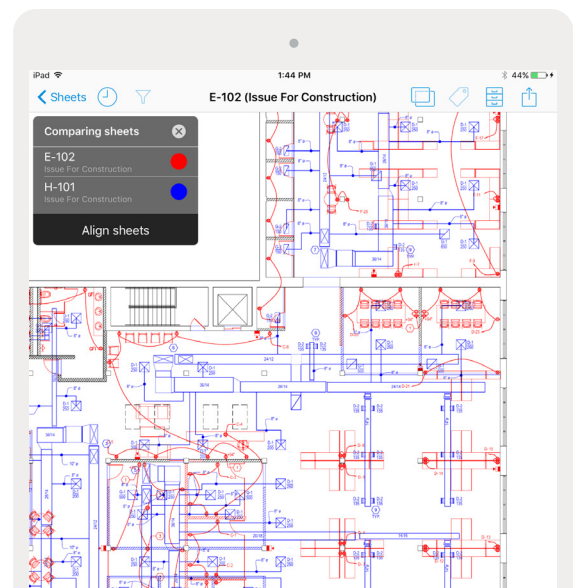
Furthermore, PlanGrid provides weekly activity reports that RPG can share on a project, which has not only improved communication between the teams on each job, but also helped to strengthen client relationships.

As Yvonne says, "By sharing weekly reports with our clients, we're able to keep them up to date with what's happening on-site. This has proved to be an excellent way of building trust with our clients and, as it's an additional service that we can offer, this helps to set us apart from other construction firms."

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"Issue management is so much easier with PlanGrid. We can invite our partners to use the platform and they can add and share questions and comments on particular issues, on the drawings themselves. It's really important because the Righetti philosophy is to work with our partners as one team."

— **Yvonne Schroeder**
Partner, Righetti Partner Group



Results

RPG has now been using PlanGrid for four years and the platform is utilised by the team and many partners on every site management project. To date, PlanGrid has been used on over 25 projects for a total of over 25,000 sheets. The business has experienced significant improvements to its productivity, particularly through a reduction in costly rework.

PlanGrid also delivers an important financial benefit for the company by enabling costs to be allocated more accurately across each phase of a project. As under Swiss regulations the final fee is often calculated according to the work completed in each building phase, using the platform helps to ensure that RPG earns the correct total for every job.

Efficiency has improved noticeably, with reductions in the numbers of meetings and trips to the site office. Towards the end of projects, Yvonne estimates that PlanGrid supports a time-saving of half a day per person. By addressing outdated and frustrating processes, the business has improved the working lives of the teams on-site.

There are also direct cost-benefits. With fewer paper documents, the company has seen a dramatic reduction in the cost of printing and reprinting documents, that

is built into overall project costs for clients. Using a digital platform ensures that RPG can continue to offer competitive and accurate quotes to clients.

RPG's innovation group continually works to ensure that the company is getting the most from PlanGrid's features and to consider new ways to use the platform. A significant milestone has been establishing a master project template, including pre-defined stamp categories, an issues list layout and reporting templates to be used for each new project. This ensures that processes are standardised on every job.

Critically, PlanGrid has helped RPG to improve collaboration with its highly valued project partners, through better information sharing and issue management. This has addressed a key source of disputes and helped the company to maintain excellent relationships. As of 2018, RPG has decided to use PlanGrid and its tablets on every project possible. By staying true to its philosophy of cooperation, the company is brilliantly positioned to thrive in the future.

Key Benefits

- Time savings of 4 hours per week, per person (depending on the stage of the project).
- Teams use PlanGrid in German across all projects.
- Reduction in paper printing delivers savings to the client.
- PlanGrid standardisation through a RPG master project template on every Righetti Partner Group project.

