

CASE STUDY

Hallmark Cards Saves 1,000 Man Hours a Year by Streamlining PMO Projects and Agile

About Hallmark Cards

Hallmark was founded in 1910 by entrepreneur J.C. Hall and is still led by members of the founding family today. Headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, Hallmark's businesses employ approximately 28,000 people worldwide. The Hallmark experience extends online at Hallmark.com and includes Hallmark Channel, Hallmark Hall of Fame, Hallmark Movies & Mysteries Channel, and Crayola.

Challenge: Disparate Tools and Labored Practices Hindered Productivity and Visibility

Hallmark Cards' PMO consists of 15 people responsible for maximizing the company's investments while reducing its risk. Among its responsibilities are resource and capacity supply and demand management, investment and workforce planning, reporting and analytics for its team members and managers, PPM governance, and vendor management, including Planview.

Charged with finding a collaboration tool for project teams, the PMO hoped to make significant changes to how resources and projects were managed. Adjunct teams were using many different project management tools, including several rogue implementations which flew under security's radar. Hallmark Cards needed a single collaboration tool that would pass strict security standards, was flexible enough for the various types of teams that needed to get work done, and yet still worked for offsite and remote resources.

"We were using sticky notes on visual boards around the company and too many spreadsheets," says Dawn Acosta, PMO consultant at Hallmark Cards. "The boards were difficult to read, cumbersome to create and maintain, and required physical presence to view and update them. Many projects had up to 15 feet of sticky notes (literally), yet we were still trying to collaborate through emails and complex spreadsheets."

Equally inefficient were many of the PMO's team meetings to discuss roadblocks and progress, turnarounds, and standard work. Without a consolidated, cloud-based system to house project and resource information, team members found the meetings less than productive. They spent much of their time focused on what cards to put on the boards and what work should be captured.



Overview

Customer

Hallmark Cards

Geographies

Global

Employees

28,000

The PMO at Hallmark Cards digitized story map management, project execution, and archaic Kanban board practices. Using Projectplace, dramatically improves visibility and streamlines standard project and task procedures, increasing team collaboration and productivity.

Solution: Make Invisible Work Visible

Security was a critical factor for Hallmark Cards, and the PMO was responsible for ensuring that they were compliant to company requirements and system standards. Another factor that they needed to consider was making sure whatever solution utilized would be a cultural fit for the company. Planview Projectplace® was selected after an extensive pilot, and once rolled out, the benefits were immediately felt.

Story maps went from arduous to coordinated, and the real-time visibility was a welcome change. "We were able to put everything about what we wanted to deliver and prioritize, the activities we must do and how they all ladder up all in one tool," says Acosta. "We still use cards and columns, but now it's all digital. It's easier to manage and manipulate, we can have more content with checklists and color-coded tasks, and best of all, the information is in real time and accessible from mobile devices."

Collaborative Kanban boards enable the PMO to "make invisible work visible," something that hasn't always been easy to document for creative, intellectual work. Instead of "never-ending" lists of sticky notes posted to a physical wall, the PMO teams and project managers view more detailed digital cards in Projectplace, either on a large monitor in stand-ups, at their own desks with "My Overview" a list of their own assigned work, or at the water cooler from a mobile device.

Impromptu status meetings no longer occur in a hallway conversation as team members and project managers riffle through personal planners and notebooks. Monthly and quarterly data reports accurately capture standard work. "Using Projectplace, we save time by choosing one impact that was valuable and sharing that in social conversations. By bringing consistency to the everyday work done, we are able to find ways to improve along the way, and not miss steps," says Jill Hayhurst, digital PMO Resource and Capacity manager at Hallmark Cards.

Stand-up meetings have dramatically improved, particularly now that team members can access the data in real time. "We've saved approximately 1000 hours a year across our 12 person PMO using Projectplace," says Acosta. Instead of handwritten action items and to-do notes, users can quickly create and assign cards to the right team member from their device during the meeting or any time they need to. Work no longer stops when someone is on vacation as another team member can easily pick up the card, see the status of the work, and not miss a beat towards completion.

"We've saved approximately 1,000 hours a year across our 12-person PMO using Projectplace."

— Dawn Acosta, PMO Consultant at Hallmark Cards

Because of the flexibility and intuitive interface of Projectplace, it didn't take long for users to realize the tool could be used for more than project collaboration with Kanban boards. The PMO has eliminated manual, lengthy resource requests, onboarding, and offboarding with Projectplace. They now have everything in one place, including standard operating procedure documentation, checklists, statuses, and metrics.

"All of the intercommunication and documentation that occurs in Projectplace reduces the churn through Outlook, with the biggest benefit being it links all of that communication back to the item you were talking about," says Hayhurst. "We no longer have to switch between applications to figure out what is happening and where the communication occurred."

Results: Modern Day Collaboration Using Digital Boards

Since eliminating sticky notes in favor of Projectplace, the Hallmark Cards PMO has:

- A single, secure, and virtual place to collaborate, standardize work, and post updates improving visibility and accuracy of resource request records
- Reduced PMO meetings from 1 hour to 30 minutes resulting in 1,000 man hours saved per year
- 24/7 access to the real-time status of tasks, creating accountability and responsible team members, and improve delivery of everyday work and projects
- Drastically reduced the number of emails and eliminated spreadsheets used, saving time and confusion
- Broadened the flexibility of Projectplace to creative use cases that support PMO work
- Expanded collaboration workspaces from 2 initial groups to 6 additional teams outside of the PMO within the organization

To learn more about what Projectplace can do for you, visit [Planview.com](https://www.planview.com)