

The Go-Ahead Group uses **Microsoft Project Online** to create a mature, Next-Generation Project Management Office



"I could see our progression slowing, we couldn't carry on the way we were. We had implemented project management best practices and standardised templates, but still needed a tool that would help us manage projects through a single repository."

Enrique Fernandez-Pino,
CIO, Go-Ahead Group

Industry

Travel & Transport

Location

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Challenge

To standardise project management working practice and improve project visibility

Solution

A cloud-based solution for end-to-end project management with a single repository

Products & Services

Microsoft Project Online

Results

Single point of visibility, improved skills development, more strategic decision-making, better project and budgetary reporting



To support its vision of a world where every journey is taken care of, The Go-Ahead Group needed next-generation project management capabilities to help power its project work with customers, employees, governments, local communities and strategic partners. With Microsoft Project Online, the IT Division has created a corporate solution which is helping to streamline project management, improve portfolio visibility and enhance project and budgetary reporting.

The Go-Ahead Group is the UK's leading transport provider for rail and bus services. Founded in the early 1980s, Go-Ahead has grown from a small bus operator in the Newcastle area to a FTSE 250 firm that supports over a billion journeys each year, including around a quarter of London's buses, 30% of the UK's train passenger journeys and four rail contracts in Germany as well as bus services in Singapore and Ireland.

Developing a strategy for next-generation working practice

Go-Ahead's vision is to create a world where every journey is taken care of; for Group IT that means optimising technology, maturing service delivery and introducing new IT Services with cost efficiency. To increase the value it delivers, Go-Ahead wanted to develop greater maturity within its Group IT project management office and decided to take a closer look at how people were working and how projects were managed, with a view to developing tools and processes that supported the business's overall vision.

Governance and discipline were particular areas of concern. With many project managers dependent on Excel Spreadsheets and standalone apps, information quality was variable, plans were cumbersome to maintain and reporting was time-intensive.

"The real value from using Project Online is having one version of the truth with accurate data and a consistent approach to project delivery. We can trust the data which gives me confidence to deliver our vision and goals."

Melanie Wood, Head of Programme Management, Go-Ahead Group

Key benefit

Both the project management and leadership teams have access to a single point of truth with dashboard status views and detailed reporting to aid project management efficiency and strategic decision making.

"It made sense to look at Project Online to help us achieve better ways of working because it allowed us to make the most of the Office365 ecosystem and the integration it offers..."

...one of my favourite features in Project Online is the Portfolio dashboard in PowerBI – I have that open all day, every day and can slice and dice the data to drill down on project owner or portfolio."

Melanie Wood, Head of Programme Management, Go-Ahead Group

"One of my big objectives was to capitalise our cost in IT – and with this solution we will be able to do that by accurately tracking project time and capitalising that against the CAPEXs we raise. We will be able to show the real value we're adding through each individual project..."

...we want to become a Centre of Excellence within the business and Project Online is empowering us to do that."

Enrique Fernandez-Pino, CIO, Go-Ahead Group

A mature solution for project management success

After implementing Office 365, the Go-Ahead IT team was keen to make the most of the Microsoft cloud ecosystem. It decided to look at solutions based on Project Online to rapidly introduce greater project control and visibility, and standardise ways of working

The first critical step was to create an environment for standardised project management with defined project types, integrated reporting and dashboard views. This instantly provided the capability to manage projects end-to-end with a single repository for all documentation, including schedules, RAID logs and change requests. By linking Project Online to the SharePoint PMO portal, Go-Ahead was also able to create an online project management community to increase communication and sharing of best practice.

One of the biggest impacts has been in reporting. Instead of cumbersome, manually maintained spreadsheets, the leadership team can now access real-time PowerBI dashboards. The dashboards allow them to clearly see the entire portfolio status and to view highlight or deeper dive reporting for any project.

Project Online has given Go-Ahead's IT PMO a platform to continue building capability into the future. Time-sheeting and resource management capabilities have been added together with the ability to log project costs in the future. The solution has been so successful that other areas of the business are now looking to adopt it.

Business benefits

Single version of the truth

Project managers now have total visibility over their portfolio, can log project progress and create reports easily. IT leaders have access to PowerBI dashboards which help streamline risk and issue management so problems are resolved swiftly.

Empowered efficiency

Detailed reports are quickly and easily generated, showcasing the value of project work to the wider business. Project information can be swiftly accessed from any location whilst reducing management time spent on routine admin tasks.

Next-generation collaboration

Go-Ahead has matured its project management office rapidly, blending skills across the team and standardising working practices. Thanks to familiar tools, and anywhere access, the new solution has seen an amazing rate of user adoption.

Strategic portfolio management

With a single information repository in place to provide a complete view of the project portfolio, the Go-Ahead leadership team is empowered to make informed strategic decisions about the right projects to deliver corporate strategy.

Improved ways of working

The Go-Ahead team has been able to add greater maturity and rigour to its project management practices. Project managers can share best practice and lessons learned, which has been critical in growing and blending the team's skills

Streamlined costs

As the team starts to build a complete view of project time and costs, they will be able to accurately cross charge Group IT time to individual project budgets, moving towards a model where ROI can be accurately measured.