



MEISTERPLAN

Success Story

Tackling the Uphill Challenge of Effective Resource Management & Better Transparency



The Challenges

Brittany Jonaitis, a Senior Business Technology leader, first saw the challenges of multi project and resource management while leading an operations team for a travel technology company. They started with a team of five that was managing a few thousand listings. By the time they were managing tens of thousands of listings, the team had only increased to ten, so it was very difficult to coordinate so much work with so few resources while understanding the priorities of each project in context with the others. Portfolio management challenges weren't unique to small teams. Brittany has experienced these challenges both while leading a small team and when responsible for an entire business unit. In her experience, smaller teams have more intimate knowledge of all the parts of the whole, but they can typically only execute a small number of projects concurrently. With larger teams, although they can execute many more projects, there are also more knowledge silos, and it takes much more time to attempt to share that knowledge. Often times that ends up breaking down the velocity and the entire process, which leads to missed deadlines and projects being delayed.

Brittany said, "I've experienced challenges with portfolio management and resource management in every organization I've been a part of. It just seemed that every time you wanted to get something done, particularly with different departments or even just managing a team of people, there were so many moving parts that needed more organization and more understanding of the big picture as well as details on what actually needed to be completed. Trying to manage that with different tools being used by different teams was always a challenge."

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The Search and The Solution

What initially led Brittany to Meisterplan was that of being able to simplify and sum up the work in progress for an executive audience. She said, "I was asked to provide a Gantt chart of all of our projects, and this probably makes me the worst project or program manager out there, but I hate most Gantt charts. They are typically too rigid. I hate maintaining them. I hate all of the pieces of the puzzle that you have to constantly add, change, or move to be able to give projections. The executive team liked using Gantt charts for scenario planning and trying to answer questions such as "What would happen if we did this project instead of that one?" Similar to compiling status reports, Brittany had to spend a large amount of time creating those Gantt charts to try to answer those questions. She found many tools that help you make Gantt charts. However, she had issues with the fields not matching to that of her industry or what the business wanted to track. She said that even when she finally had a Gantt chart ready to present, the question of "But when is it going to be done if we take these other factors into consideration?" would still get asked, and it was very difficult to answer that question with a static Gantt chart.

Brittany solved these problems with Meisterplan. "It was much easier to show those changes in the workflow using Meisterplan. I needed to be able to show the impact of decisions quickly, and dynamic features of Meisterplan like the auto scheduler and the scenario planner really help to do that. We could finally answer the questions 'And what happens if we add this or what happens if we remove this? What happens if we interrupt this project and we split it? How does that change the objective of the year?'" Brittany said.

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About the Customer

Brittany Jonaitis

Senior Business Technology Leader

Brittany Jonaitis is a Senior Business Technology leader with demonstrated experience in formulating and delivering complex transformation initiatives for the travel and real estate data sectors. She specializes in managing technical programs and technical product management.

In her own words: "My specialty lies in the ability to observe, ask questions and unpack solutions. I understand what the business needs and I understand how to break that down into small and actionable tasks for a developer to take and execute. Technical problems can become very complex, and I love creating the efficiencies and reducing the rework and organizing things into buckets that allow logic to drive the velocity of something."

Scenario planning wasn't the only benefit Brittany and her team gained from using Meisterplan. Two other important goals for the organization were increasing transparency and better managing and maintaining prioritization. They needed to accurately display how much work they had going on at a given time. They also needed to make sure they had mutual agreement and accountability when it came to prioritization. Brittany said, "The executive team didn't always have a clear picture of all of the moving pieces. The CEO might be focused on his top three priorities, and the COO might be focused on three, but they might not be the same three. And the CTO may have another five priorities that he is trying to work with his team on. With Meisterplan, we were able to get that transparency and see everything we had going on. Then we could see that these five projects touch several teams that are all working on different things right now. So as a group, we were able to decide and stack rank these and say which projects are truly more important."

When they saw that it was not feasible to do all of the projects they had planned, they used features in Meisterplan such as the must-have and cut-off lines to drive decisions. The major priority projects would move above the must-have line, and other projects would be put below the cut-off line with the intent to revisit those projects at a later time when resources were available. "It was a challenging conversation to have, but the visual assistance of Meisterplan made that conversation so much easier. The next time we had a meeting, maybe a month later, we didn't have to play catch up trying to figure out, why did we make this decision last month? Well, we made this decision last month because we had 15 other projects they were working on. Now that five of those are wrapping up, we can take a look at the projects below the cutoff line and decide what the next big thing we're going to work on is. Meisterplan really helps facilitate that conversation and ensure that we adapt our plans in a realistic and feasible way."

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What Value Did Meisterplan Bring to Your Company?

"The biggest value that Meisterplan gives us is the ability to communicate what's being worked on across the enterprise. It adds transparency as to why things are stack-ranked the way they are, and it holds people accountable to decisions that were made. We can't come in two days after a planning meeting and try to make another project a bigger priority now. No, we had a meeting about that. We made a decision, and we need to go and finish what we started. If we keep interrupting our work and the things that we have in flight, then we're not going to get anything done. The velocity gets crushed. With Meisterplan, we have something to anchor to and fall back on and say we all made this decision as a group. Everyone saw this, everyone agreed to this and we're going to run with this. That has been the biggest benefit to having the tool available. This has resulted in more projects being completed on time, and more projects being aligned to a strategy, because they were accurately prioritized."



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Get in Touch



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