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Throughout the timeline of any project—big or small—architects, engineers, contractors, clients, and industry professionals must juggle data, manage expectations, and solve problems from concept to completion. It's work that needs the right kind of flow to keep tasks moving forward. For creatives, task management can be tough, but automation can help. **Aaron Kivett** has been helping to solve this problem for 20 years in the AEC industry. As part of leading project information management software company **Newforma**, he shares what it takes to manage team communication and the tech that can help your team stay on track.

Ask the Expert

How can I improve my product workflow?

The first thing to understand about project teams is that they're made of people, and there are things that are unique to how designers in this industry work. Their processes are fluid. Project teams usually only come together once. They're building one-off structures so it can be difficult to develop repeatable processes and workflows. To top it off, designers like to design their own solutions.

In this space, technology software is your friend. It makes lives easier to access and organize project data, collaborate with project team members, and manage construction projects from inception to delivery. But not all software is equal, and it's crucial to get things right. The best application for this matter will solve project workflow pain points without disrupting the way people work.

One of Newforma's biggest strengths is that it doesn't force teams to change their workflow. Project team members don't have to learn a new system, and you don't have to file things a certain way. A key aspect of this approach is our connector strategy. We know Newforma can't provide software that does everything—there are other tools out there that are very good at what they do, like Bluebeam for viewing and marking up PDFs. Rather than replace or fight against a favorite system, we've integrated programs like Bluebeam into how we work so everyone can keep using the tools they like. We just make them an integrated part of the project process.

Email management is a core piece of what we do. Design teams work on a project basis, and they need to organize emails by project. You also have people on the team who need access to those emails. Companies usually have policies for managing and filing emails, but that maintenance takes time—and people often just don't do it. Newforma automates this aspect. Identify the project an email belongs to and our software eliminates 98% of the administrative pain.

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Read more from Newforma in the **July/August** issue of gb&d, when Kivett looks at reducing project risks.

Newforma's submittal log not only tracks submittal information; it also automatically logs each step in the review workflow. Companies like Corgan have turned to Newforma to streamline their process.