

Arvig reduces project time and increases productivity with Wrike

Established in 1950, Arvig is one of the largest independent telecommunications and broadband providers in the United States, delivering cutting-edge technology to both residential and business customers. Arvig has differentiated themselves by offering exceptional service and customer experience.

The Challenge

In the past decade Arvig has more than doubled in size. With rapid growth came challenges with managing larger teams, increased workloads, project visibility, efficiency, and coordination between teams across multiple distributed locations. This led to an increase in project duration which resulted in delays, missed deadlines, reduced efficiency, ineffective project handoffs, difficulty tracking metrics, under-utilized resources, unproductive meetings, email overload, and employee frustration. Arvig needed a flexible tool that would enable their organization to align and fully utilize industry best practices. A tool that would be the single source of truth for information and communication, provide a bird's-eye view of their projects, dive deep into details, reporting, and communication, streamline day-to-day workflows in a way that aligns daily activities with overarching company goals, and be flexible enough to support an agile methodology.

"Our explosive growth came with the natural challenges of overcoming new communication barriers which required not only maintaining but improving workplace efficiencies," says Shaun Carlson, Director of R&D and Continuous Innovation at Arvig. "We needed a tool that would foster communication and manage an entire portfolio of projects end-to-end. We wanted a tool that could dig into the day-to-day operations, help us structure our projects effectively, give visibility into tracking progress, and provide a single view that helps us prioritize."



SUCCESS STORY FACTS

250%

more projects managed today

16 to 9

months average project time before and after

900+

hours saved onboarding new employees

~20%

average cost reduction per project

Carlson knew a solution had to be bigger than any one team. “We’re not just talking about a single project management team. We’re talking about this single source of truth across the entire company.”

With siloed communication tools like IM or email chains, Arvig employees spent hours looking for or resending project information. “Our teams used Asana, Smartsheets, Product Plan, Sticky Notes, Spreadsheets, and other manual tools,” Carlson shares.

He says, “As an organization, Arvig is constantly optimizing our processes to make our services better, faster, and easier for customers, and we needed one centralized collaboration and work management tool to help us achieve that.” So Carlson began a search for a work management solution that could be deployed across the entire enterprise. After an extensive selection process, Arvig chose Wrike.

The Solution

A single source of truth for information and communication

With Wrike, “having a single source of truth for information and communication makes it easy for leadership to stay in the loop or get a new team member up to speed quickly. It mitigates the risk of tasks falling through the cracks,” says Carlson. For example, “Just last week during our senior leadership team meeting, there was a question about a project. I was able to go into Wrike, drill into that section, and find that piece of data in a minute. Something that I could not have done prior to Wrike.”

As another example, “In the past when we onboarded new developers, it took 6-9 months before they reached peak productivity. With Wrike as a single source of truth for the knowledge and activities surrounding our work, and the Kanban methodology to help us prioritize tasks, that onboarding timeline is only 3-4 months now which has been a game-changer for our enterprise business growth.”

On top of a centralized source of information, one of Carlson’s favorite features is Wrike’s [@mentions](#) that helps simplify cross-functional project communication. “It enables us to have project conversations right on the task itself instead of in emails or IMs. Having communication and action history on every single task or project in one place is key. Our daily Scrum reports go right into the project-level comments so that you can go to the project and look at the scrum. You can also look at the daily Scrum reports from the very beginning of the project and measure progress.”

Arvig

CASE SUMMARY

Customer

Arvig

Headquarters

Perham, MN, USA

Industry

Telecommunications

of employees

900

Wrike Products

Wrike Enterprise

Wrike Resource

Wrike Integrate

of users

350

Top Challenges

Lack of visibility

Getting org aligned

Need single source of truth

Project management

Streamline workflows

Integrations

Zapier

Google Drive

Google Chat

SMS

Departments using Wrike

R&D, IT Services

Marketing

Engineering

Accounting

Human Resources

Capturing that big picture and detail-oriented view was exactly what Arvig wanted in a collaborative work management solution. Carson explains, “We started this practice with another work management tool, but Wrike layers this functionality into a much, more effective structure. (And) I can control the permissions and structure of the data much better. The other tool was too unstructured for the enterprise level of our particular needs.”

Visibility to optimize day-to-day operations and corporate strategy

It’s critical to Arvig’s leadership that they optimize resource utilization when planning and implementing corporate strategy. “Visibility into our work was the number one goal with Wrike,” says Carlson. “As we set up our Wrike folder structure, our focus was to maximize transparency. At the same time, Wrike also allows us to strategically limit access to key work folders like HR or payroll. This structured flexibility sets Wrike apart.”

When Wrike introduced the new [Spaces](#) feature, Arvig leveraged it further to enhance visibility. They created four Spaces within their Wrike infrastructure – Person, Operations, Projects, and Workflows – and moved their folders into the appropriate Spaces.

“We’ve used Spaces to make our work more accessible and visible in Wrike’s left navigation pane. Spaces also facilitates our ability to manage permissions in a hierarchical way to best maintain the openness/transparency we desire and minimize admin work.”

Wrike has not only provided an infrastructure that gives visibility into day-to-day operations, Wrike empowers team leaders to prioritize tasks, aids them in understanding their team’s workload, and gives them the ability to track effort to progress.

“We’ve created [Wrike Dashboards](#) for our Scrums that list every task, open, closed, or otherwise, organized by assignee, and we use them as our agenda for every Scrum. We just start at the top of the list, work our way down, and answer the three common questions: what did I do yesterday, what am I committing to do today, and what are my roadblocks? Wrike has really improved our Scrum practice.”

“An early win with Wrike was a very large deployment of a new television service called Arvig WiFi TV,” Carlson goes on to elaborate. “The project had 380+ tasks in a giant list and that was our project plan. There were due dates, but that was it. With Wrike, we were able to break the project up and build structure with deliverables, dependencies, time frames, resource requirements, and more. Through this process, our central office supervisor discovered that he had employees getting ready to start tasks that didn’t



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Shaun Carlson, Director of R&D and Continuous Innovation

need to be worked on for two more months. He was able to reallocate that labor towards immediate customer needs. That's a great example of where Wrike brings efficiency into our work every day."

Kelly Maier, a Project Manager on Carlson's team adds, "With greater clarity, speed, and accountability in managing our projects, we can easily reallocate resources to work on different projects that are critical to the success of our organizations. Being able to optimize project time we save on average ~20% per project. A significant cost reduction when multiplied by 50 projects each year."

Adopting agile throughout – Plan to Resource, Deliver, and Optimize

"Wrike empowers the entire organization to become truly Agile because we're able to create project plans, document tasks, and show the relationship between estimated versus actual effort," says Carlson.

"We've been pushing our projects and operational queues into a Kanban or Scrumban methodology, focused on task scoping and measuring KPIs. We track overall queue size and are beginning to attach ROI to individual tasks and projects – both in dollars and hours perspective.

The biggest gain we're realizing today is by using the Kanban methodology in 'Work Queues' where the goal is to empty the queue. This has created a measurable increase in our overall throughput and provided clarity regarding the work that's outstanding." Additionally the combination of spaces and Wrike [cross-tagging](#) functionality allows Arvig to dedicate a space for all project planning and then tagging projects into the Operations space when work commences. Here, live projects are assigned, managed and tracked in multiple operational queues.

"By just using the built in Wrike reports and analytics, this has been incredibly successful in giving us visibility regarding what's most important and urgent and what the level of outstanding work is on a team and individual basis."

"For example, our software development team was able to migrate to a Kanban style of work last year. Previously we used a methodology that just prioritized tasks by due date. That style created delays and overdue tasks. We arranged our Wrike views to support a Kanban methodology and created rules around workflows. From my compliance dashboard, I can easily see where there are blocked tasks and how I can unblock them.



"With greater clarity, speed, and accountability in managing our projects, we can easily reallocate resources to work on different projects that are critical to the success of our organizations"

Kelly Maier, Project Manager, R&D and Continuous Innovation.

Using Wrike I was able to measure project time pre and post-migration. Projects that had taken 9 months to complete now take 16 weeks. Today, we can manage 250% more projects, which means we can be more responsive, increasing customer satisfaction.”

Integration and automation streamlines processes and removes administrative tasks

Arvig values that Wrike is flexible enough to not only adapt to different team styles and workflows but also integrates with other tools and systems. Carlson says, “With Wrike, we’re able to accommodate the day-to-day work operations of an individual team while still creating alignment around process, collaboration, and communication across the entire enterprise organization. That’s no easy task!”

“For example, we use Zapier to help us seamlessly integrate Wrike with the many different tools our teams use, while still keeping project information in one place within Wrike. Our teams also really value the [Google Drive integration](#). We’ll have a file in our project folder on Google Drive that’s linked to a Wrike task. Wrike enables our teams to make comments or edits live in the document – smoothing the collaboration, proofing, and approval processes.”

Carlson adds, “Right now, I’m also very excited about Wrike Integrate and its ability to trigger actions based on [custom project workflow statuses](#). We change the parent folder of a project in Wrike based on the Project Stage (Incubating, Staging, Delivering, Closing, Completed) which for us is a custom field. This then feeds into our project pipeline reports and helps us improve efficiency and mitigate administrative overhead for the project managers.”

HR standardizes onboarding and saves 900 hours a year

Arvig’s HR team uses [Wrike Request Forms](#) and [Wrike Templates](#) integrated with custom coding during their onboarding process. Carlson explains, “Our team created a template with all the tasks needed to onboard a new employee. With [Wrike Integrate](#), we were able to write a script that automatically assigns or reassigns the right managers to tasks when the team creates a new project from the template. Now, our HR team can simply create a project from the Wrike template using a Wrike Request Form and they’re done – just like that.

They save 3+ hours per employee of administrative work and development. Considering that we onboard 300+ employees a year with our seasonal work, our HR team is saving an estimated 900+ hours a year by automating administrative onboarding tasks.”

“It all comes down to Wrike helping us automate as much as possible through their flexibility and Wrike Integrate. We’re always exploring more integrations, for example, we just did an integration with [SMS](#) and [Google Chat](#). Streamlining our tools opens new doors for automation which is critical to our continued growth in a hyper competitive environment.”

Conclusion

Wrike’s flexibility to adapt to each team’s needs and tools has helped Arvig align on an enterprise level and thrive in an extremely competitive industry. To top it off, the use of Wrike has boosted employee satisfaction at all levels. Carlson says, “Team members love Wrike because they no longer have a long list of 400+ disjointed tasks. They feel like they have more control and visibility into how their work impacts company goals. Supervisors like that they can visualize project timelines and employee workloads in Wrike to easily create prioritization for the team.”

Find out how Wrike can help your business

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