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# WHITE PAPER

## Project Management Duly Noted:

Leveraging Lotus Notes for Better Project Collaboration

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# Project Management in Duly Noted:

## Leveraging Lotus Notes for Better Project Collaboration

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### Abstract

For many knowledge workers, Lotus Notes is the lifeline to their team members, supervisors and clients. Unfortunately, in many cases Lotus notes is not utilized to its fullest potential beyond the use of email and calendaring. For those working in a Lotus Notes environment, the powerful collaboration capabilities, the sharing of documents and the simple extension of composite applications are never fully realized. In addition, the online and offline capabilities unique to Lotus Notes are not fully benefited by its users.

For the project management professional, when effectively implemented, the Lotus Notes platform can be the ideal environment to roll out an effective project management governance framework that will drive better results, increase visibility and provide a more collaborative environment among its project stakeholders.

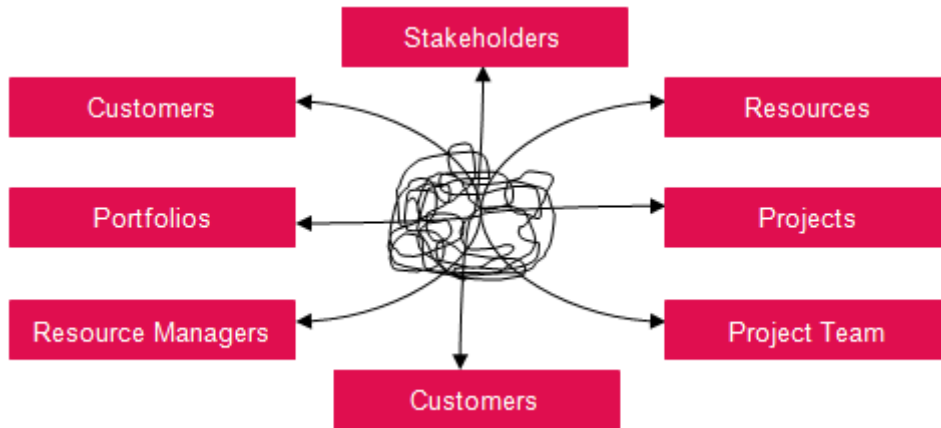
In this paper, I will be highlighting how project management organizations can get the most out of their Lotus Notes investment.

### The Challenge: Sharing Silos of Information among Project Stakeholders

Today, more than ever, project management organizations are challenged with delivering a single and accurate view of portfolios, projects, activities and resource statuses to all project stakeholders. Moreover, the effective sharing and collaboration of project details and documents are compounded by the reality of dispersed project teams, increased activities performed remotely and client expectations to deliver “local” support within their global context.

In a project-centric environment, one the biggest challenges project leaders face is quickly accessing the right project information at the right time to respond effectively to project bottlenecks and have a clear view of the statuses of their project pipeline. Capturing detailed project information that is inaccessible and not easily shared is inefficient, and in some cases detrimental to a project’s successful outcome. In many cases, project stakeholders have poor visibility into the high level details of their projects and portfolios, and cannot see the project status and tracking details in a digestible manner to make well informed decisions.

Ineffectively sharing, collaborating and tracking project details among stakeholders can typically lead to a common “Hairball” scenario where siloed environments are created, project priorities are determined by the loudest voice and the communication of accurate project information is lost. The result is a project environment that lacks cohesiveness and ultimately delivers sub-standard work to unsatisfied stakeholders.



Finally, for many project organizations, siloed project information raises the obstacle of implementing a governance framework and business process strategy in place that will ensure that only relevant information is provided to the diverse stakeholders working on projects. Effective project management demands a clear and concise path to project success. More importantly, leveraging the right platform for collaboration and the centralization of project information can transform an organization's project management strategy from a wasteful bureaucratic nightmare to a lean project machine.

### What's so special about Lotus Notes?

At the heart of many of the activities that surround a project, you can find hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of emails and documents distributed and shared among the project team and its stakeholders. Even in the most unstructured and rudimentary project management environments, the people behind projects embrace fundamental communication tools to push a project along its path to completion. Whether a formal project management strategy is adopted or not, emails and documents are produced and shared in order to ensure projects are planned, assignments are scheduled and status/progress reports are shared among stakeholders. The challenge with emails and documents is that organizations are faced with the reality of relying on this unstructured and uncontrolled project data to gain a clear picture of their projects progress and assist them in delivering their projects successfully. Unlike most email and calendaring tools, Lotus Notes has an additional advantage over competing products that is often unknown or not fully benefitted by its most active user – the knowledge worker.

Most organizations implement Lotus notes for its powerful groupware capabilities allowing for both web-based and client-server access to email, shared calendars, document management and discussion threads. What many users of Lotus Notes do not realize, is that apart from it being a powerful collaboration tool, Lotus Notes (unlike other similar applications in its category) is also a technology platform in which organizations can build composite web and client-server applications as an extension to its existing functionality. So what does this mean to users of Lotus Notes? In effect, this means the possibilities are endless when it comes to develop easily enterprise software extensions that logically fit in with your most active Lotus Notes users. Email and Calendaring are staple tools for knowledge workers that deliver the ability to build seamless enterprise systems, such as Project Portfolio Management (PPM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications on a single platform. These are powerful solutions to assist knowledge workers in their everyday activities.

### Transforming Email into an Enterprise PPM System

As a technology platform, users of Lotus Notes can take their everyday run of the mill email and calendaring system to the next level by easily leveraging a comprehensive project portfolio management system built on its platform. Different than other technology platforms, applications built on Lotus Notes do not require "integration" between the core email system and the new Lotus-based application. Thanks to the architecture of Lotus Notes, which essentially is a series of databases (termed .nsf files) that interact with each other, new applications are new databases within Lotus

Notes. In the same way email would interact with existing databases such as the calendar and other tools already delivered as standard Lotus Notes functionality, a new Project Portfolio Management (PPM) system built in Lotus Notes is just additional Notes Storage Facility (.nsf) files with the ability to exchange information among all other existing databases. So what does this all mean for project management practitioners already working with Lotus Notes? This means that technically Lotus Notes can extend its functionality to deliver a seamless single PPM platform that will leverage your existing project communication and information already residing in your email, calendaring, and document management system.

In addition to its unique architecture, Lotus Notes delivers to its users powerful capabilities beneficial to project-centric environments that can be incorporated into a PPM extension of its offering. These capabilities include:

- **The concept of replication** – Replication allows for users of Lotus Notes to have client-server access to all their Lotus Notes databases/systems (e.g. emails, calendars, documents, PPM system, etc.) on their local machine. In a world where most of today's applications demand that you be online to access your system, replication allows for both online and offline capabilities. This can be especially powerful for project teams that may work in remote locations and still need to access, share, and report on project information.
- **Embedded workflow engine** – Lotus Notes provides a powerful workflow engine that lets organizations design phases, approval and notification workflows that map to their business processes. In enterprise project environments that demand multiple levels of approval, project governance and compliance with policies, plans and documents, this standard functionality allows for a more powerful PPM solution built in Lotus Notes.
- **Document management** – The project document plays a major role in all project environments. Lotus Notes' ability to deliver complete document management functionality seamlessly linked to projects for the easy sharing and collaboration among teams and clients, confirms the alignment of its platform and project management activities.
- **Web capabilities** – Today's project-centric organizations demand the ability to access project information anywhere at any time keeping all stakeholders in the loop. Lotus Notes' marriage with Domino allows for rich web applications to create web/cloud environments for better collaboration and easy access to all users who may or may not have access to Lotus Notes.
- **Security** – Project stakeholders, leaders and teams can be quite diverse. The fact is complex project environments can have sensitive financial or activity details that need to be managed. Lotus Notes' flexible security in determining user types among diverse users, allows for a more inclusive PPM system that will only reveal relevant information to the different participants connected to projects.

## Genius Project for Domino: Ensuring Project Organizations are Getting the Most out of their Lotus Notes Investment

Genius Project for Domino integrates seamlessly with your Lotus platform, without third party software. Having all the features of Genius Project integrated into your system through a shared platform means a shorter learning curve and reduced implementation costs.

For people using Lotus Notes or Lotus Domino, Genius Project for Domino is, without a doubt, the best possible project and portfolio management solution. As a recognized IBM Business Partner, Genius Inside takes advantage of the latest technology from Lotus Domino to build superior enterprise project management tools.

Genius Project for Domino is a 100% Notes-based solution that requires no external executables or libraries (DLLs), and guarantees full compatibility with your existing information environment and infrastructure.

To learn more about Genius Project for Domino please refer to the following link:

[http://www.geniusinside.com/solutions/software/genius\\_project\\_for\\_domino](http://www.geniusinside.com/solutions/software/genius_project_for_domino)