

ABSTRACT

Cx 2.0 – Building Commissioning Needs to Change

Can building commissioning be thought of as a sustainable activity? Only if the industry elevates both its' thinking and its' approach. Business-as-usual is dying.

Cx 2.0 is a cloud-based, informal collaborative initiative to move commissioning activities into the cloud. Becoming paperless is only the beginning. That's because the focus on becoming paperless carries additional benefits, including becoming more efficient and productive.

Traditionally, commissioning is paper intensive. Consequently, as more and more paper is produced, efficient and timely delivery of documents and deliverables suffers. People also suffer, bending under the weight of falling further and further behind. Too many long nights at the office or toiling over a home computer takes its toll.

As efficiency and timeliness flounder, essential information is delayed or even forgotten. Many times, the executed test procedures are never seen until a Commissioning Final Report is issued, sometimes up to a year following Substantial Completion. Updated Issues Logs may lag weeks behind the discovery of issues.

Another core advantage of Cx 2.0 is to provide an improved user experience of commissioning. For many people, commissioning and its seemingly byzantine processes can appear to be a giant black hole, a gravitational tunnel of mystery that most busy and productive people wisely avoid. This understandable behavior results, however, in owners, designers and contractors having little to no sense of control. How can you manage something that you don't understand, something that requires reading a 50-100 page Commissioning Plan in order to develop a basic – and still confusing - overview?

The answer lies in cloud-based software tools, but only if they are deployed with a mindset that insists on keeping things simple and easy-to-understand. There is always someone who can take the simplest thing and make it utterly incomprehensible to their neighbor. Why repeat history?

Web-based commissioning and project management software has been available for years. But many of these past efforts were viewed as being overly complex or too time-consuming. Software as a service (SaaS), or cloud-centric software deployed and used on the internet, changes the game. It can be astonishingly powerful, and equally astonishingly simple to deploy and easy to use. The key is to keep it simple.

This paper shall briefly examine the forces that are creating pressure for the commissioning industry to adopt a cloud-based approach. The paper will also depict, with illustrations, how today's software tools look and work – relative to commissioning.

From a universal perspective, energy may be said to be inexhaustible. But commissioning's current approaches are exhausting, to both the individuals involved in it and to the environment. This paper will also examine the human benefits of cloud-based commissioning.

Finally, the paper will take a look at several end users who represent an unstoppable force for change, powerful corporations and federal agencies who are insisting that design and construction teams – including commissioning providers – make significant and sustainably sound improvements to their delivery systems.

About

Mark Walter is president of Virtual Commissioning, and founder of the term Cx 2.0. He authors the Building Commissioning blog, the largest commissioning blog in the United States. He is a member of the California Commissioning Collaborative Advisory Council, and has been involved in the HVAC industry since 1973.

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