



Environmental Solutions: 2004

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Project Dashboard Applications Lead to Better Business Decisions

Few would argue that periodically reviewing and updating strategies and approaches is critical to successfully managing a business. After all, one does not apply the same techniques, tools, and strategies in managing a start-up as one does a mature business. Just as you analyze your business and its markets throughout its stages and adjust your strategies accordingly, environmental programs and liabilities can, and should, be evaluated and managed taking their evolutionary nature into account. Failure to do so, inevitably results in projects that take longer and absorb more resources than necessary.

The idea that environmental projects go through

phases that require changes in strategy and technology (sometimes drastic changes) to ensure they are addressed in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible is typically referred to as "Remediation Life Cycle." The concept has been around for years and enjoys widespread acceptance among environmental experts. Yet, it is not a concept that has been effectively employed to any great extent. Why? A primary reason is that the typical environmental project generates voluminous data that are extremely cumbersome to manage and evaluate in an effective and meaningful fashion. Thus, reevaluation of project data to optimize approach has historically been undertaken only sporadically, often

at long intervals and driven by regulatory concerns rather than economics and efficiency. However, a new generation of tools is emerging to facilitate this process.

"Project Dashboard" applications have become a powerful new way of providing project information to decision-makers at environmental sites. Combining industry-leading IT applications such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and web services to develop Project Dashboards creates integrated vehicles that allow project managers and owners to evaluate data, analyze relationships and trends, and update site conceptual models and strategies in real time. These applications also allow the sharing and discussion of data and ideas by project members at disparate locations, which can further facilitate decision making and reduce costs.

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