Partner4Work Speeds Project Funding With 77% Faster Contract Approvals

Significantly reduces regulatory compliance burdens, automatically tracks contract progress, and eliminates redundant work.

Partner4Work is a workforce development organization serving the Pittsburgh area. Among many other activities, Partner4Work:

- Helps businesses find the talent they need to grow and thrive.
- Connects adult and young jobseekers with career opportunities.
- Provides community organizations with resources to make an impact in their communities.

245
Worked with 245 new employers

1,300
Helped 1,300 people find jobs that pay an average of $14.50/hour

3,000
Helped nearly 3,000 people develop effective job seeking skills.

160
Organized more than 160 recruitment events for area businesses

2,000
Connected nearly 2,000 young adults with summer jobs

3,600
Provided more than 3,600 hours of professional development to area service providers
Challenges

Partner4Work receives and dispenses public and private funds in its collaborations with non-profit, government, and industry partners. Documents such as funding contracts, requests for quotes, requests for proposals, and related exhibits were created in MS Word, negotiated mainly via email, and edited using the “track changes” feature. Multiple versions of documents were stored on a local shared drive. A grants management team shepherds contracts to completion.

These paper-based, manual practices created challenges familiar to many businesses today. Challenges arose at nearly all stages of the process including:

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**Symptoms:** Conflicting or missing information caused confusion and repeated delays. Employees wasted time tracking down information and performing repetitive, duplicative tasks.

**Causes:** Inability for all employees and parties to collaborate on a single version of contracts and exhibits on one platform. Inability to visually pair isolated discussions with the resulting edits to contracts.

Multiple employees from various departments at Partner4Work need to edit funding contracts and exhibits to reflect ongoing negotiations and changing circumstances. Decision-makers discussed edits via separate emails, notes, and memos. Other employees had no way to know these discussions existed. They struggled to follow through on changes to contracts.

*Emails and notes sharing reasons for changes get buried. As a contract made its way through multiple departments, it'd be repeatedly delayed because team members wouldn't have all the details they needed, or the information they had no longer matched up and they didn't know why.*

*Nicolas Jaramillo, Operations Manager at Partner4Work*
Complying with regulatory audits felt like a “wild goose chase.” Employees wasted time chasing paper trails to recreate past events and searching for digital and physical files for review to reimagine “why” a particular auditable decision was made.

Symptoms: Inability to document decision-making processes in real time. Inability to produce distinctive audit reports documenting activities.

Causes: Issues that caused delays took too long to surface. Team members struggled to determine the next appropriate action to take and who is responsible.

Partner4Work's funding activities are heavily regulated with stringent compliance requirements. All funding decisions and activities must be recorded. Events must be monitored to ensure payment obligations are met and milestones occur by required deadlines. Partner4Work entertains an average of 3 official audits a month. They also regularly perform proactive internal audits.

"If we needed to show how we procured a funding source three years ago,” explains Nic, “we had to ask each team, ‘What did you decide and why?’ It could take days, even weeks to find all the data an auditor requested. It was just a wild goose chase.

Nicolas Jaramillo, Operations Manager at Partner4Work"
When employees weren’t on wild goose chases, they were juggling hot potatoes. Bottlenecks would go undetected, causing even longer delays.

“A recipient might ask that we send funds twice a month instead of once a month. Passing along the request was like a game of hot potato. After initially scrambling to get the contract out, it would be stalled three months later. We’d have to backtrack to figure out who dropped the hot potato.”

Nicolas Jaramillo, Operations Manager at P4W

Solution

Partner4Work’s strategic plan for 2017-2019 included initiatives to support operational efficiency and build a system of evaluation and oversight that would help them creatively solve problems.
Partner4Work evaluated three contract management software options in search of a scalable solution that would meet their strategic goals to support operational efficiency and solve problems creatively.

Partner4Work chose the Parley Pro platform because, among other things, it gives employees across multiple departments the ability to:

- Collaborate smoothly within a single platform
- Use AI-based tools to track activities and automate repetitive tasks
- Record all discussions and activities in reliable audit trails
- Make decision-making processes available to everyone
- Introduce much-needed transparency and clarity into monitoring progress

“We've standardized all our internal processes within Parley Pro and left our goose-chasing, hot potato juggling days behind.”

Nicolas Jaramillo, Operations Manager at P4W

“With Parley Pro, we perform as a cohesive, agile team. We rely on Parley Pro to perform edits faster and track activities accurately,” Nic says. “Our regulatory measures are simple to define and easy to enforce. Perhaps even more notably, policy exceptions are now distinct and the reasons they were made are now accurately recorded.”

Benefits

Managers speed project funding 77% faster

With streamlined and automated workflows, a typical funding contract is now finalized in an average of 3 weeks versus 3 months (77% faster). A standard request for proposals is sent out in 2 weeks instead of 6 weeks (66% faster).
Every activity and each communication is automatically recorded within the platform in perpetuity. Whether an employee needs to comply with an auditor’s request or update a client, easily accessible data provides context for all decisions.

"With the complexity of our funding, having all the information in one place is essential. And given the collaborative nature of our work, communicating within one version of a contract is critical for saving time,” Nic says. “We are much more nimble and agile to accommodate requests for even minor contract changes.

Reliable audit trails and reporting capabilities significantly reduce regulatory compliance burdens

"It's an end to the wild goose chase

Nicolas Jaramillo, Operations Manager at P4W

Every activity and each communication is automatically recorded within the platform in perpetuity. Whether an employee needs to comply with an auditor’s request or update a client, easily accessible data provides context for all decisions.

"All the answers are in Parley Pro. No searching for data points. No hunting down emails to see what happened and why,” says Nic. “Not only are decisions recorded forever, they are also attached to all the documents associated with the contract, too.

Nicolas Jaramillo, Operations Manager at P4W

Partner4Work employees save an estimated 100 hours per month with greater transparency and tracking capabilities

Managers immediately know where each contract stands, including tasks to be completed,
Partner4Work plans to incorporate more business processes into Parley Pro in which document creation, linking and management is fundamental. We will bring many more opportunities to Pittsburgh workers,” says Nic, “and we’re using Parley Pro as the springboard for future achievements.

There’s no more hot potato dynamics. It’s been a huge time-saver,” says Nic. “Because issues are discovered sooner, resolutions are sought much quicker and delays are avoided entirely.

Positioned to share more opportunities more efficiently

With modernized operations, Partner4Work can now more efficiently share more opportunities through a growing number of partnerships and a vibrant portfolio of programs and initiatives. Partner4Work employees are freed from outdated, error-prone administrative burdens and can come up with creative new ways to better fulfill their promise to build a thriving workforce in the Pittsburgh area.

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Interested in enjoying results like Partner4Work? Ask us about Parley Pro!

Parley Pro is a modern, cloud-based contract negotiation and management platform that harnesses the power of real-time collaboration to facilitate a smooth and efficient workflow. If you’d like to explore how Parley Pro can help you, your team, and your business, request a demo to learn more.