PERSPECTIVE

The Model Is Coordinated. Is the Project?

A coordinated model should carry the reasoning behind the work into procurement, installation, inspection, and turnover. Otherwise, coordination ends where the project still needs it most.

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Coordination has to survive the meeting

My background in architecture and construction technology has shaped a fairly simple expectation: information should help somebody build. A model can be beautifully organized, technically sophisticated, and useful to a coordination team while still leaving a superintendent with unanswered

questions. Which detail governs this installation? Has the product been approved? What changed since the last release? Can the next trade begin?

Those are coordination questions too. They may never appear in a clash report, but they determine whether the work proceeds. When I ask whether a project is coordinated, I am asking whether the people making those decisions are working from the same understanding of the scope, its requirements, and its current condition.

Preserve the decision behind the geometry

Consider a congested corridor above a hospital ceiling. The team adjusts a duct route, moves a support, and agrees on an installation sequence. The updated model resolves the visible conflict. That is valuable work. But the resolution may also affect fabrication, a penetration, access to a damper, and the order in which trades occupy the space.

If the project only distributes the updated model, someone downstream has to reconstruct those implications. The drawing team needs to know what to revise. The purchasing team needs to know whether an order is affected. The field team needs to understand the sequence. An inspector needs the applicable requirements and evidence.

I want the decision to remain connected to the objects and locations it concerns, including why it was made and who authorized it. Geometry describes the resulting arrangement. The decision record explains how the team arrived there and what must happen next. Both belong in the project's working information.

Make the handoff part of the coordination process

A coordination issue should have an explicit destination after resolution. Sometimes that destination is a fabrication release. Sometimes it is a revised drawing, an installation package, or a field verification task. Closing the issue should not erase the obligation to carry its consequences forward.

That means separating several states that are often compressed into one green indicator. A solution may be agreed but not documented. It may be documented but not released. It may be released while material already ordered still requires review. These distinctions help a project manager understand what remains exposed.

I would start with one repeatable handoff. Take a coordinated equipment installation and connect the accepted arrangement to its approved product, current detail, location, responsible trade, and verification requirements. Then ask the receiving team whether it has enough information to act. Their answer is a better measure of the handoff than the number of files distributed.

Keep the field in the same conversation

The field also discovers conditions that coordination could not fully anticipate. A surveyed elevation differs from an assumption. An existing obstruction appears. A delivered assembly has a feature that was represented only approximately. Those observations need a path back into the project's controlled decision process.

A photograph in a message thread can start that conversation, but it should not become the only record. The observation needs an identifiable location, a connection to the affected work, and a responsible person to evaluate it. If it changes the installation, the resulting decision should update the information used by everyone downstream.

This is where I see the value of connecting models and drawings to field workflows. People can enter through the representation that makes sense to them and still reach the same underlying work. A superintendent should not need to become a modeling specialist to understand an unresolved constraint.

Measure the project outcome

We should continue measuring coordination effort, but we should also measure what happens after a resolution leaves the VDC team. How many resolved issues reach the field with the necessary context? How often does a crew stop because a decision was not carried into its package? How much installed work requires review after a late change?

Those questions reveal whether coordination is becoming operational knowledge. They also identify where the process needs improvement without assuming every failure originated in the model or with the field team.

The direction behind blade ai is to connect the project information people already produce so those relationships remain usable. For me, the standard is practical: can the next person understand what applies, what is ready, and what still needs attention?

A coordinated model is an important achievement. Its full value is realized when the project can carry that coordination through the work, with the reasoning and evidence still attached.

What’s Next

The next post looks at drawing revisions and the people, installations, and inspections that need to respond when a sheet changes.

Read online: inertiasystems.com/resources/blog/the-model-is-coordinated-is-the-project

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