

Cutting Through the Noise:

How Zebra Slashed Admin Time by 33%



Best known for digitizing and automating workflows in hospitals, warehouses, retail stores and beyond, Zebra Technologies runs on speed, precision, and has a highly flexible workforce. Each month, the company manages about 300 contractors, and when there is turnover, it can put a strain on teams responsible for hiring, planning, and delivery.

The challenge wasn't headcount. Contractor updates were manual. Systems didn't talk to each other. And approvals that should've taken hours often took days. For a business built on speed and precision, those delays were impossible to ignore.

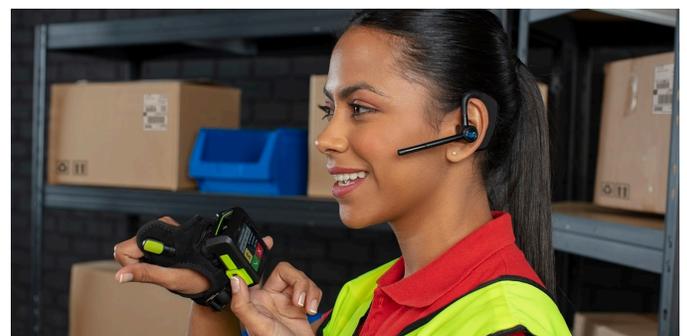
So Zebra rebuilt the workflow—with Planisware at the center. Updates now flow automatically. Approvals take hours, not days. And engineers can finally focus on the work that moves projects forward.

The impact has been that manual effort dropped by 33%, data got cleaner, and decisions get made faster. What started as a fix for an inefficient process is now a springboard for faster execution and smarter growth.

The Turning Point for Resource Management

For Shim Chaudhury, Senior Manager of Engineering at Zebra Technologies, the pressure to move faster grew by the day. His team supports the platforms that keep engineering efforts on track—from planning to staffing to execution. But managing contractors slowed things down by eating up time, attention, and momentum.

With people cycling in and out of the system every month, each one triggered a wave of updates—ending assignments, clearing allocations, and creating new demand. Every new hire meant another round of onboarding and approvals. All of it was done manually.



The process was slow. HR, Finance, and Engineering each had a role to play, but they were working off different spreadsheets and email chains. Data had to be checked, re-checked, and often corrected by hand. Delays and errors were common.

“We had dedicated teams who spent days validating data between disconnected systems,” Shim said. “A person might be terminated in HR but still show as ‘active’ in a system. It slowed down everything—approvals, hiring, program alignment.”

With Zebra shifting to more agile, SAFe-aligned delivery models, the lack of visibility made it harder for teams to keep up.

The Solution: Automating the Workflow with Planisware

To fix it, Shim and his team led an automation effort with Planisware at the core. The goals were to cut the manual work, create a single source of truth, and help engineering teams stay focused.

“Where it used to take a week and several teams, now it takes a few clicks,” Shim said. “Data accuracy is up. Manual effort is down. And our engineering teams can focus on strategic work instead of fixing spreadsheets.”

The first step was connecting Planisware to Zebra’s Human Capital Management (HCM) system. That allowed real-time updates for offboarding, name changes, and other resource changes—no more handoffs or Excel files. Then they added automation to the contractor workflow. Now, when a contractor leaves, Planisware handles deactivation, creates demand, and updates forecasts—all automatically.



The Results Show Clear Gains— and Lay a Strong Foundation for What’s Next

The impact was immediate—and measurable:

- Data accuracy in contractor records jumped from 70% to 100%
- Manual effort tied to resource management fell by 33%
- Approval workflows shrank from a week to just a few hours
- Engineers now spend less time on admin and more time delivering value

“It’s a huge efficiency gain,” Shim said. “Now we trust what we see. We’re not chasing people anymore. We can focus on execution.”

But the bigger story is what this unlocks. With Planisware now connected to Zebra’s wider ecosystem, Shim’s team is looking ahead—to deeper integrations with tools like Fieldglass and smarter use of AI and analytics.

“This is our data foundation,” Shim said. “When AI comes in—and it will—we’ll be ready. We’re not just looking to automate. We want insights, better decisions, and portfolio-level strategy. And it starts with good data.”

Overcoming Challenges: From Technical Hurdles to Cultural Buy-In

None of this happened overnight. As with any transformation, Zebra faced some resistance. The biggest shift wasn’t the tool—it was the mindset.

“We’ve shifted from managing headcount to managing outcomes,” Shim said. “When people, programs, and priorities are aligned, better decisions follow.”

“People had been doing things a certain way for years,” Shim said. “There were spreadsheets, custom workarounds, and lots of tribal knowledge. The hard part was helping everyone understand not just how the technology works—but why we were doing it.”

Shim credits Zebra’s success to strong internal alignment, clear value storytelling, and Planisware’s support along the way. “We had to prove the business case,” he said. “And once our leaders saw the data, the support followed.”



Looking Ahead: From Resource Management to Strategic Portfolio Management

Zebra's journey isn't over—it's evolving. With Planisware now part of the core engineering workflow, the focus is shifting from managing resources to managing strategy.

The foundation is in place. Teams are working with better data. Decisions are faster. And the company is moving toward broader adoption of strategic portfolio management.

What started to clean up a broken process is now shaping how Zebra plans, builds, and grows. The next phase? Smarter planning, stronger execution, and a system built to adapt.

