

COVER 2026

www.bizfortune.com

Business Fortune



Chris Vandersluis, Founder & CEO

HMS Software: Building Smarter Ways to Manage Time and Projects



HMS Software: Building Smarter Ways to Manage Time and Projects

In 1984, HMS Software was a small software consulting company helping a large manufacturing company in Montreal bring project management technology into its business. The team found a scheduling tool that matched the client's needs but there was one problem. The company also wanted a timesheet system designed for project management and nothing like it was available at the time. So HMS Software decided to build one.

That simple solution to a client's need became the foundation of the company. Founded more than four decades ago, HMS Software has grown into a recognized leader in enterprise project management and timesheet solutions. The company has continued to help organizations track their time, people, and project resources more effectively. That first timesheet also set HMS Software on its path in enterprise time management, eventually leading to the creation of TimeControl in 1994.

Today, HMS Software serves organizations with enterprise timesheet and project management solutions. Its flagship platform, TimeControl, connects project management with areas such as finance, HR, payroll and billing, helping businesses get a clearer picture of how their work and resources are being used. Over the years, the platform has remained updated with advances in technology, having evolved from networked PCs through to the use of cloud computing technology.

In this exclusive interview with Business Fortune, Chris Vandersluis, CEO of HMS Software, discusses the challenges faced by the project management and enterprise timesheet industry, the idea behind TimeControl's multipurpose approach and how HMS Software uses technology, client feedback, and industry insight to keep its solutions relevant.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the project management and enterprise timesheet software industry, and how is HMS helping clients overcome them?

There are numerous challenges facing the project management industry and the enterprise timesheet software industry. One of the most difficult is the sheer number of products that claim to do this work for you. Someone starting new in deploying an enterprise project or timesheet system, must confront a staggering number of products. A simple search doesn't help. Hiring a consulting firm to do the work simply abdicates your responsibility and gives it to the consultant.

Our work has been defined by solving a solution. If we cannot

identify with the business problem they are trying to solve, we probably won't be working together. We are committed to be a solution provider. Our website, our resources, our content is almost all educational. As a result, when we get a new prospect, they are almost always far along in their selection process. There are numerous challenges facing the project management industry and the enterprise timesheet software industry. One of the most difficult is the sheer number of products that claim to do this work for you. Someone starting new in deploying an enterprise project or timesheet system, must confront a staggering number of products. A simple search doesn't help. Hiring a consulting firm to do the work simply abdicates your responsibility and gives it to the consultant. We believe that clients are intelligent enough to decide for themselves and we give them all the information they need to do so.

When we get a list of feature requests from a client, we are careful to ask what the business purpose of each request is. This ultimately results in more successful engagements and happier clients.

TimeControl has earned recognition for integrating project management, finance, payroll, and human resource processes into a single enterprise timesheet platform. What inspired this multipurpose

The Mind Behind HMS Software

Chris Vandersluis, the founder and CEO of HMS Software, publisher of TimeControl, has become known around the world in the project management industry. He is an economist from Montreal's McGill University and has been published hundreds of times, including in Fortune Magazine, Heavy Construction News, the American Management Association's Handbook of Project Management, Microsoft's TechNet, Computing Canada magazine, and PMI's PMNetwork Technology Trends column. He is featured in Marquis Who's Who in America and speaks at project management and technology events across North America.

approach, and how does it create measurable value for organizations?

The idea of the multi-purpose timesheet came from our first client. That was Philips Information Systems in Montreal. The timesheet we wrote for them was to be managed by the project management group but the chief client was the Payroll and HR department. The look and feel of what they each wanted was very much the same but once the data was entered, how it was organized and how it was approved was completely different. We struggled with this at the time and ultimately realized that we had to combine goals of auditability with flexibility. Those are not natural partners. It was an incredible success. The end result would, ten years later, become the inspiration of the multi-purpose product we call TimeControl.

How is HMS leveraging emerging technologies, cloud capabilities, and

system integrations to help clients improve operational efficiency and decision making?

We have had to keep up with emerging technologies since our founding. TimeControl version 1.0 was a DOS character-based system. A few months later, TimeControl 2.0 was a Windows product, then we had a client-server product, then one of the first ever browser-based products in the late 90s, then we embraced Internet connectivity then a Mobile App, then a SaaS version. Our newsletter is called "The

Leading Edge" for a reason. We believe we must keep up with the technology stack. That includes updating for multiple browsers, multiple databases, changes in operating systems, authentication mechanisms, security updates and so much more. We dedicate a portion of all development to updating architecture vs. updating features. We think of TimeControl as something that can be counted on and that means updating the product in ways that may be invisible to the end-user but essential to keep up with technology that changes almost daily.



HMS works with organizations ranging from mid-sized businesses to large global enterprises. How do you ensure your solutions remain flexible enough to address diverse operational requirements while maintaining simplicity for end users?

That question sums up the HMS Software design philosophy. A timesheet has to be simple. It may only take up 5 minutes a week of an end-user's time and the end user probably isn't that committed to even doing the timesheet. It is likely they are required to complete it in order to be paid or fulfill other essential business requirements like invoicing. So having a product that is so complex that we need to give training to end users for their 5-minutes of access each week makes no sense. At the same time, the requirements of the operators and supervisors of that system are likely to be complex. We determined early on that the interface provided to end-users would have to avoid much of what administrators would see so we use user profiles to mask menu selections and data that aren't relevant to end-users and prefill as many questions as possible to make the end-user experience as short and effective as possible. We use the flexibility built into TimeControl to provide a myriad number of options to the administrators who likely spend a lot more time in the product extracting, conditioning and analyzing the data.

Beyond delivering software solutions, HMS also provides consulting and implementation services. How do these services help clients achieve better project outcomes and long-term success?

We think of TimeControl as a SaaS + "Saas Plus" offering. We provide the product either as an online subscription or as a license for on-premise deployment but we also make our internal experts available to help clients move faster on configuration and on design option decisions. We have technical staff who have been with TimeControl since the beginning and our staff are able to leverage their experience of hundreds of deployments to share with new and existing clients how they can get more out of their TimeControl system. This is commonly asked for during the deployment phase but it is also extremely common to have an existing client ask us after a couple of years to re-engage with them to see how TimeControl can be extended into other aspects of their organization.

As customer needs and technologies continue to evolve, how does HMS ensure its solutions remain innovative, relevant, and aligned with market demands?

We get input on where to target our technical expertise from several sources. First, we are in constant contact

with our clients and requests for new features and with identifying business requirements we might be able to respond to in the future. Second, we are watching our industry constantly. Innovation can come from many different technical sources and we are reading all the time. Finally, we have our own experts internally who look at upcoming technology from within our industry and in related industries to see where we should be investing our efforts. In some cases we want to be at the forefront of a technological advance and in other cases we think we should wait until a technology establishes itself. The measure is always to determine how our efforts will advance the experience and effectiveness of our clients. We won't deploy a feature just to say we did it. It has to serve some purpose.

Looking ahead to 2027, how do you envision the company contributing to the continued evolution of the project management and enterprise timesheet software industry?

As we come to the end of 2026 and look to 2027 and beyond we see HMS being an ongoing leader in the project management and enterprise timesheet space. We have been expanding and will be expanding further at the end of 2026 and in 2027. Our five-year plan keeps all our staff and partners aligned on making sure TimeControl continues to provide value to our current and future customers.

BF

"We believe that clients are intelligent enough to decide for themselves and we give them all the information they need to do so."

Company Overview

Company Name: HMS Software

Founding Year: 1984

Website: www.timecontrol.com

Email: info@hms.ca

COVER STORY