



## About ALEC

ALEC Engineering and Contracting LLC (ALEC), part of the Investment Corporation of Dubai (ICD), is a large construction company with related businesses operating in the Gulf Cooperation Council, with a strong presence in Africa. ALEC has consistently evolved and grown over the last 20 years to become a trusted partner for the execution of complex and iconic construction projects. The company builds and provides construction solutions to exceed their clients' expectations for quality, safety, functionality, and aesthetics.

ALEC has extensive experience in complex projects across diverse sectors, including airports, retail, hotels & resorts, high-rise buildings, themed projects as well as construction management, design management, estimating, cost planning and procurement. ALEC also possesses a Design and Build capability, which enables them to provide integrated construction solutions to their clients.

ALEC has received numerous awards for excellence, quality, safety, reliability, and sustainability and are ranked amongst the leading contractors in the region.

### LOCATION

Dubai, UAE

### DATE & TIME

10 Weeks  
September - November 2019

### PARTICIPANTS

4 Teams  
24 People

## OpenExO

### Why ALEC Decided to Hire OpenExO

We had several meetings with ALEC's Board of Directors to explain the ExO methodology. They challenged us with questions such as, **"Why would we put \$500k in this project rather than sending a bunch of people to an MBA course?"** We were then able to refer to our grand results and case studies from other similar companies that achieved growth and true innovation through our ExO Sprints.

Our approach, which revolves around using their intellectual capabilities and our coaching, was decisive as well as opposed to consulting.

ALEC spoke with one of our clients who went through a 10-week ExO Sprint, and that was the confirmation. One week later, ALEC was ready to start the ExO Sprint.

### ALEC's Goals with the ExO Sprint

- Internal Alignment
- Reinvent the Company through Innovation
- Digitize all processes, and ensure the core runs the BIM (Building Information Modeling) software
- Ability to influence the development of new projects as soon as possible, through reorganization of the value chain



### Why Hire OpenExO?

"We are in good shape now, but if we want to be in good shape 5 years from now, we have to fundamentally change our business now."

#### **HERCU VILJOEN**

Managing Director  
Related Businesses, ALEC

## ALEC's Challenges Prior to the ExO Sprint

- Outdated digital support of processes (many manual steps)
- Siloed organization, leading to lack of alignment
- The most significant challenge ALEC faced on their journey was “people’s resistance to change,” which included overcoming the “this is how we’ve always done it” mindset that led to slow and low user adoption
- Other challenges faced included:
  - Maturity level of stakeholders
  - Low margins, which lowered risk appetite for R&D initiatives
  - A large requirement to re-skill and upskill ALEC’s workforce

## ALEC's ExO Sprint Execution & Solutions

### Execution of the ExO Sprint

This is the first Sprint in which a third-party psychometric analysis was used to select the optimal Sprint teams—a highly successful experiment by Paul Epping (ExO Head Coach) and Tariq Qureishy.

### All Initiatives Approved

8 ExO initiatives were created, in which ALEC merged 2 ExO initiatives. All initiatives are currently under development in the organization, and each have project leaders. The board made this decision, and the CFO is overseeing the execution.

ALEC is allocating funding every quarter accordingly to ensure the initiatives goals are met.

### One Initiative's Success

ALEC successfully set up its new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, which they described as a “stepping stone” for its digital transformation. This is a direct tie to one of their ExO Initiatives, which they hired-out instead of creating in-house.

Recently, ALEC signed a deal with CMiC, the innovation leader in ERP and field operations software for the construction industry in North America, to use its platform and software to run financials and field operations. CMiC's Single Database Platform™ architecture delivers a single version of the truth to users across all functional areas.

## Follow Up, January 2021

In addition to all of the ExO initiatives being approved for funding, ALEC organized education sessions to familiarise people, who were not on the ExO Sprint, with the method and thinking of the ExO methodology.

ALEC continued to innovate through running 7 internal ExO Sprints at the same time to find solutions post-Covid for the construction world. The world is seeing less demand for new buildings, while a lot of current buildings are empty. ALEC is now looking for ways using their learning from the ExO Sprint to exploit new activities for these buildings.

ALEC launched their CELA initiative (which was also combined with the ALEC+ initiative post-sprint) at the end of 2020. The initiative was launched as a separate company. Severin Tenim, who was on the ExO team that originated CELA initiative, is now the Founder of the company.

ALEC is also currently in the process of launching a modular manufacturing business, LINQ Modular, that will incorporate the Tetra initiative which focuses on building affordable modular style houses.



“Of all parts of the ExO sprint, the MTP is by far the most challenging. We are getting there, but it is not good enough! With daily work, the MTP is getting better all the time. It definitely will have sustainability, future, and impact as components. This is what is the central theme of this amazing company: commitment! It is not easy to digitize mortar and brick. The ExO Sprint was a mindset shift process across all layers of the company. We are blessed to be able to work in such an amazing ExO ecosystem!”

**Kez Taylor**  
CEO, ALEC