

DRIVING CONSULTANCY EFFICIENCIES



DRIVING BUSINESS EFFICIENCIES is clearly a necessity in a world where clients demand more and more for less and less. A business without lean processes is at a competitive disadvantage in a society where value for money is loudly demanded, not least because clients themselves have to demonstrate the same.



1 CREATING LEANER PROCESSES

The Lean Enterprise Institute says Lean applies “in every business and in every process”. Two business managers talk about how Synergist helps them deliver it.

- *“It’s removed a lot of admin from [the team]. It’s cleaned everything up. Made it slick. No more Post-It notes flying around! No more physical timesheets! No, we wouldn’t go back to all that now.”* Deep Sangar, Production Manager of a project-based business.
- *“The previously laborious month-end procedures, requiring 10 days of long hours are now completed in 5 days, even though the volume of work passing through the agency has almost doubled. Even better, this is being achieved without having to work late due to the massive improvements in efficiency Synergist has bought to the accounts department.”* Paula Murray, Financial Controller, Leith.



2 ATTAINING OPTIMAL SCHEDULING AND UTILISATION

Scheduling and Utilisation delivers powerful benefits such as links between timing plans and estimates to scheduling to avoid any re-keying, instant visibility of current and planned loading on all resources and teams, easy drag-and-drop of tasks onto resources using an easy visual interface, timing plans that change will automatically highlight scheduling issues, under- or over-loading highlighted with colour coding, read-only visibility for appropriate team members, email alerts of new tasks allocated, and team diary options.

Overall, scheduling and utilisation is one of the most satisfying applications in the agency management suite because it makes such a difference to efficiencies, and with such ease. Simon Butler, co-founder of Purestone, talks of the ease of use and access:

- *“Accessing information, such as staff utilisation, is now done at the push of a button. It’s powerful.”*



3 REPLACING A TROUBLESOME SYSTEM

Very many Synergist users were keen to tell us of their frustrations with previous experiences...

- *“It took an enormous amount of time to sort out each month. We only found out what was really happening after the event, when of course it was too late.”* Steven Clark, Financial & Commercial Manager, Tayburn.
- *“[Our old system] did not have the flexibility or levels of reporting we needed to keep fully up to date with all our activities.”* Matt Fairweather, founder of the business in his name.
- *“We previously used an in-house system. But it was unreliable and insufficient.”* Steve Laird, Finance Director of consultancy Online Design & Engineering.
- *“It was based on a proprietary database product that had been modified over some years. This was proving to be both time consuming and cumbersome.”* Andy Wainwright, Operations Manager, Fifth Ring.

DRIVING CONSULTANCY EFFICIENCIES



4 LINKING TO ACCOUNTING

Why is it important to be able to link your consultancy management system with your existing accounting system?

It's because your team has invested a great deal of time getting to know your accounts package. It might not be perfect but it does the job. Its interface, its procedures and its reporting have all become second nature. Synergist is integrated with all leading accounts packages.

- *"The direct link to our Sage Accounting package makes life easy."*
- Financial Managing Partner at a London agency.
- *"Full compatibility with our Sage Accounts software rounds off the seamless integration."* Andy Wainwright, Operations Manager, Fifth Ring.
- *"The integration with Sage accounts has assisted with recording sales, leading to quicker debtor analysis and debt chasing, therefore improving cash flow for the business."* Julie Cole, Financial Controller, EDP



7 REDUCING INTERNAL CONFLICT OVER RESOURCES

Are there bunfights in your company? How are resources allocated -- to the projects that need them most or to the people who shout the loudest? Here's one manager who remembers all too clearly how things used to be.

- *"It used to be a bun-fight in the studio to decide which job was going to get which resources. Imagine: over 20 people, and the one who shouts loudest wins."*
- *"Not now: it's all transparent. Everybody can see everybody else's priorities and workload."* Manager of a 45-strong project-based company using Synergist.

6 FINE-TUNING TARGETS

How can you make sure targets are fair? How can you remove the heat out of the exercise of setting them? It's all about having the right data and sharing it with the team.

- *"It's also helped with fine-tuning targets. It's removed all the debates and emotions – it's all factual now. We discuss the benchmarks with each department."* Lisa McLaren, Director of Finance, ClickThrough.



8 DOING INVOICES FASTER & MORE ACCURATELY

The time saved with system-generated invoices is one of those ROI exercises that users like to talk about a lot. The reason is that the before-and-after benefits are so clear cut.

- *"An example of the significant difference made by Synergist is in client invoicing. Previously we would have spent the equivalent of 10 working days just creating the individual client invoices. Today the same job can be completed by one person in less than a day"* Michelle Earl, Managing Director, Earl & Thompson.
- *"Before Synergist, it turned out that we had a loophole. Sometimes, jobs could go all the way through the studio and not get invoiced. We were completely unaware of that before."* Gareth Moore, Chief Operating Officer, Creative Jar.
- *"Our invoice process is now instant."* Lee Day, Company Director, RDJA.

5 INTEGRATING THE FINANCE FUNCTION BETTER

Can a business management system help people collaborate between departments that previously hardly spoke to each other? Yes, say many users. Here are two managers' views:

- *"As finance director I was nervous getting Synergist at first. Finance was separate from the rest of the agency. I was in my own little world. Not now. Everything's connected, visible, transparent."* Lisa McLaren, Director of Finance, Clickthrough.
- *"In the old days we used a clunky, horrible job management system. I used to have to sit down with the account managers every month and ask questions like 'Why is this job over?' and 'Why have we not billed this one?' and it took an enormous amount of time to sort out each month. We only found out what was really happening after the event, when of course it was too late."* Steven Clark, Financial & Commercial Manager, Tayburn.