



Duncan Enterprises reduces meeting times by 90%

Vertabase® Pro generates cost savings and improves communication ■

Case Study

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Duncan Enterprises, based in Fresno, California, is the largest hobby ceramics and craft paint and glue manufacturer in the world. Its 15 person Creative Services department executes approximately 30 jobs per week with 100 open at any given time. The projects include eight to ten people including staff from Advertising, Craft Design, Product Marketing and Sourcing. Scheduling and planning were previously done without any resource planning tools, and staff reported overload and frustration with unrealistic deadlines and lack of access to necessary resources.

The fast-paced, quick-turnaround workload, where critical factors such as capacity, resource load and deadlines were allocated manually and without access to updated resource allocation information, was causing employee dissatisfaction. In addition, department management found itself spending time on "tedious and duplicitous paper trail updates" rather than actual management.

Challenge

Department management needed a tool to improve project planning and management, one that would integrate existing Microsoft® Office documents with a project tracking system. Even though Microsoft Project was in use elsewhere in the company, department management decided against its use, finding it "tedious and hard to read." The project management tool would need to provide real-time project status and capacity planning based on actual resource usage, not guesses and instinct, as well as plan to capacity, not solely based on requested due dates.

Solution

The department tracks every project using Vertabase Pro. The tool is so broadly accepted that users have even used it for "honey-do" projects outside their

planned workload. The team uses resource management reports to complete more projects ahead of schedule than ever before, while leveraging the data in the management reports and warehoused projects to more accurately plan future projects based on past performance. "We don't lose any information, if questions come up later," said Victoria Raines, Advertising Business Leader. "We have all the documents, notes on tasks, completion dates, etcetera, right there in Vertabase Pro."

Results

Resource planning is improved and employee job satisfaction has increased significantly. Ultimately, department managers now exert real control over projects and their successful completion. "Vertabase absolutely met our original objectives for clean, automated project management. The data management reports are a huge plus," said Raines. Vertabase Pro's daily task lists, central repository of information and automatic email notification have automated a previously paper-based, ineffective system, allowing the department to replace daily production meetings that averaged an hour a day with two, 15-minute meetings a week. The manpower cost savings alone from the elimination of those meetings average roughly \$700 per week, or more than \$30,000 per year. Other benefits, while less quantifiable, have improved the department's reputation with corporate leadership. "We haven't captured the cost savings of real-time capacity and project status in dollars, but Executive Staff is very pleased with our increased accountability to commitments and deadlines," said Raines. "We're extremely satisfied on all accounts. I'm trying to spread the joy of this program throughout the organization," she added.

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