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Case Study:

Monaco Lange: Powerful Clarity

Background

Monaco Lange is a team of diverse individuals with unique talents and interests. From a psychology major to a martial arts expert to musicians and a screenwriter, the engagement consultancy uses its team's experience and emotional intelligence in order to create work that is memorable and moving. With guiding principles that include "stay obsessively curious," "constantly evolve," and "stay open-minded," but also "work as one," Monaco Lange has blended fresh ideas with a unified purpose.

Colin Lange, CEO, Monaco Lange:

My partners and I were creatives. At some point, I deviated and got an MBA, but we still come at things from a different perspective. We're not a "widget through the system" kind of place. We want to do great work, excite people, and get them moving forward.

We're an engagement consultancy, a narrower field within the brand consultancy space. We work on what we call the internal side and the external side. We help clients build brands and engagement systems that allow the company to better engage employees and consumers.

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Situation

In 2012, Monaco Lange found it was outgrowing its management tools. It wasn't that the tools were bad at their core functions, but that the company couldn't continue to use these tools and maintain its own expectations for efficiency and service.

"We had cobbled together a bunch of solutions over the years. As we had grown, pieces of the different solutions had started to break down. The challenge came when we got more complex. And the throughput—the ability to track from the initial sales contact all the way through to the end accounting on the project—jumping through four or five systems became much more of a challenge. Not everybody had access to what they needed."

Colin Lange, CEO
Monaco Lange

Lange spearheaded a search for a better system that could help the company better use its data and grow the firm. Workamajig emerged as the most completely integrated management tool from sales and contract through accounting.

Lange: We pushed forward with Workamajig, and the rest is history.

Solution

Monaco Lange started with two core functions, project management and sales, adding in other components along the way. Lange stresses that other companies looking into Workamajig should begin with the components most suited to the problems they need to solve rather than follow a predefined path, but look for the majority of the benefits from the integration of the various pieces.

Lange: What it offers in integration is what makes it really strong. The more it can do and the more you put into it—data in, data out—the stronger the whole suite becomes. That's the promise that we bought into with Workamajig. We had a great accounting system. I loved it. But the advantages of having the data integrated through Workamajig far surpassed the benefits of our previous system.

He also stresses the value of committing to creating a culture of data. The improvements in proposal accuracy, client relationships, and billing effectiveness come with a diligent approach to tracking the data produced in sales, account service, and billing.

"We've been successful in implementing good practices, and that produces exponential improvement in efficiency and successful execution for clients. You can't be wishy-washy about it. You've got to do it. By doing that, we can be better in the future. It's important that for me as an owner, for the other owners in the firm, and all the way down to project managers and designers. They like that control and that understanding. It's empowering, actually."

Colin Lange, CEO
Monaco Lange

He offers the example of a sales prospect becoming an active project. Where previously, the account management team may have a signed statement of work and a short hand-off with the sales team in order to construct the action plan for a new client, Workamajig gives the team a rich history of data to start with. All of the data collected in the sales process become part of the account operation.

Lange: It's not just converting the signature; all of the conversations, anything that was part of the sales process, now goes into the hands of the project management team on our side, take that and put it into operation. That conversion process is a very powerful thing.

Benefits

The smooth transfer of information from sales to account service to billing accounting and back through budgeting future work returned concrete benefits for Monaco Lange. Some of the benefits are the low-hanging fruit of
organization, forcing recognition of the work that's been done.

Lange: For us, just knowing better what we're doing from start to finish has allowed us to be better at billing. We don't lose payments because of a bad hand-off between systems. There were times the billing transaction was paid on a credit card, and it never came through. I know that sounds silly, but Workamajig forces you to deal with all that because it's all there throughout the processes. So we're billing better.

But beyond the benefits of more traceable accounting, Monaco Lange has become better at defining its work, and that has improved multiple aspects of its business. It assigns work more confidently to staff. It budgets projects more confidently, and it has even defined new offerings.

"This year, we're launching a whole set of products in the market. We're able to have that conversation and build these services because of the unified view into data that we've collected over the years of using Workamajig. We can look back and find the work that went into a project like workshops, define it, average it out, apply the total cost and overheard and more. Prior to Workamajig, it would have been a much more daunting task."

Colin Lange, CEO
Monaco Lange

Finally, there is the confidence that comes from knowing the agency's history of work on specific activities when it comes to budgeting new projects. Best guesses have been replaced by hard numbers, and loose definitions of project score have been replaced by detailed conversations about what will be done and the value that work will deliver.

Lange: We understand the sales cycle, and our knowledge of the sales pipeline has gotten much stronger, particularly for projects. The most critical thing on a project is getting the scope right. Previously, we'd write scope documents with ambiguity and gray areas. At the end of the day, you'd have to overservice the client in order to make up for what wasn't clear.

Passing a very clear scope from sales to operations has allowed us to be much better in delivering work that not only aligns with clients' expectations, but aligns with our business's expectations of making money and continuing to do well. Being able to capture all of that—that's a really powerful thing.

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WHAT CAN WORKAMAJIG DO FOR YOU?