



PBworks Agency Hub

Collaboration for a Changing World

WHITE PAPER

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Overview

Agencies are living through a period of tremendous change. At nearly the same time that AMC began running “Mad Men,” the advertising industry underwent wrenching change, triggered by the economic crisis and exacerbated by the rise of social media. The old 15% model is largely gone, the victim of belt-tightening by the industry’s tried-and-true clientele. Today’s world is complex and challenging. And the only certainty is that agencies need to maintain their capacity to change.

Media Fragmentation

Once upon a time, agencies focused on traditional media. First came print, then came radio, then came television. And for nearly 50 years, those three media represented the majority of the business. The rise of the Internet changed all that. First came digital, with a whole new set of advertising formats and approaches. Then came mobile, with its own set of constraints. Then came social, with a completely different set of rules.

Today, any brand that undertakes a major campaign is going to want a multi-channel effort that includes print, TV, radio, digital, mobile, and social. And that doesn’t even take into account opportunities that span different media, such as viral videos, location-based services like Foursquare, and e-commerce opportunities like Groupon.

With so many different channels and campaigns, agencies face major coordination challenges. Each component of a campaign might require a different team--or even a different agency. Layer that upon the classic issues of coordinating the different groups within the agency (business development, creative, account management, production, traffic, media buying), and the problem becomes difficult to handle manually.

Innovation and Creativity

Media fragmentation has also had the effect of increasing the value of (and the premium a client places on) creativity and innovation. Whereas traditional media such as print, TV, and radio provided a limited set of variations to worry about, emerging media such as digital, social, and mobile offer a far greater degree of freedom, which is both bracing and terrifying.

Clients who are used to working with traditional media may find this new freedom a source of worry rather than excitement. They don’t have time to follow all the latest developments, and don’t want to miss out on new opportunities--or fall prey to new problems. They are looking to their agencies for thought leadership, which means that innovation and creativity are more important than ever when it comes to winning and retaining their business.

In response, most major agencies have established media labs and innovation centers, which can provide the concentrated focus to stay current on new technologies and techniques. But generating innovation in a corporate lab isn’t enough; agencies need the ability to disseminate innovation to the people doing the client work. Conversely, agencies also need the ability to recognize innovation taking place with individual clients, and bring those experiences back to a central location.

Collaboration in a Multi-agency World

Just as media fragmentation has increased the focus agencies place on innovation and creativity, it has also increased the need for cross-agency collaboration. With the rise of digital agencies, mobile agencies, and social media specialists, it’s increasingly common to see multiple agencies working on a single campaign.

With the increased emphasis on cross-agency collaboration comes increased challenges in cross-agency communications and coordination. Somehow, the efforts of the different agencies need to come together to produce a harmonious end result. While this sort of project management might seem outside the usual concerns of a lead agency, it is critical to the business. An uncoordinated project will result in poor work and losing the client. Allowing the client, or worse, a partner agency to take the lead on project management may result in losing the status of lead agency. After all, if the lead agency doesn’t take the lead on managing the collaboration process, what is precisely it leading?

PBworks Agency Hub

PBworks Agency Hub takes Web 2.0 and collaboration technology and applies it to the changing needs of the agency world. PBworks combines wikis, file-sharing, project management, and social software into a single platform for major agencies. Hundreds of agencies, including Landor Associates and Ogilvy PR rely on PBworks to help them meet the challenges facing their business.

MEDIA FRAGMENTATION

As media fragmentation drives agency fragmentation, PBworks can act as a common platform between different groups within the agency or network. Each group can set up their own online workspaces for managing their work and capturing their knowledge, while PBworks provides agency leadership with a bird's eye view of developments and the ability to search across every nook and cranny (including within the text of any documents in the system). And when groups need to work together, they're already familiar with PBworks from their own usage.

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

PBworks improves the flow of ideas. Media and innovation labs can use PBworks to document knowledge and transmit best practices to frontline teams. Meanwhile, the work of those same frontline teams is being captured as it takes place, and central labs have the ability to monitor that work and pull out the innovations that should be disseminated to other teams.

COLLABORATION IN A MULTI-AGENCY WORLD

PBworks' hosted model is especially well-suited to cross-agency collaboration. The last thing you want to do when working with a rival agency is to open holes in your firewall to let them in. With PBworks, you can control what your "partners" can and cannot access. You can even track what they're looking at--just in case.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

In addition to meeting the challenges of the changing agency world, PBworks also helps you with the timeless challenge of client engagement. Instead of relying on emails and conference calls, agencies can use PBworks to give clients a transparent look at the creative process--and hold those clients responsible for their part in that process. Agencies can assign tasks to their clients, issue reminders when those tasks are overdue, and even get notified whenever key clients log into the system.

And by providing a persistent environment for the client relationship, PBworks can build switching costs that improve retention as well.

To see in greater detail how PBworks Agency Hub can help your agency meet today's challenges, contact us today to set up a custom demonstration.

About PBworks

PBworks (<http://pbworks.com>) is the world's leading provider of hosted collaboration solutions for businesses and education. Leading companies and organizations like FedEx, Landor Associates, and the FDA choose PBworks to help teams work more effectively across geographic and organizational boundaries, including teams that span employees, customers, partners, and vendors.

Over 85,000 businesses have chosen PBworks to share knowledge, interact with customers, manage projects, and support other forms of teamwork. We host over a million team workspaces, serve several million users each month, and 96% of users would recommend PBworks to a friend. Investors in PBworks include Mohr Davidow Ventures, Seraph Group, Sippl Investments, and Ron Conway.

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