

The Importance of a Traffic System

By Dawn Travelstead

The goal of any Traffic Department, whether within an advertising agency, design firm or public relations organization, is to increase efficiency and profitability. This can only be accomplished through the reduction and ultimate elimination of false starts, inappropriate job initiation, incomplete information sharing, over- and under-cost estimation, and the need for deadline extensions.

The core competency of advertising agencies (and other creative outlets) is not simply the production of creative work. It's the efficient management of that production. Without traffic management — the ability to carefully control and document workflow processes — even the most creatively successful agency might find itself in a state of chaos. You have to meet deadlines. You have to stay within budgets. You have to know who's doing what and when they're doing it. And, most importantly, you have to have the tools to help you do so.

There are many project management options available on the market today. An entirely web-based system such as Current**Track**SM allows your Traffic Manager to break work down into measurable increments and manageable tasks, making that information accessible to everyone within your agency whether working in- or outside of the office. A central traffic system such as this fosters a way of doing business that is much more organized than a paper system. It also makes everyone involved in the process more accountable.

As the facilitator of a workflow system, the Traffic Manager ensures the consistent delivery of accurate work on time and within budget parameters. This is accomplished through not only the initiation of project work electronically via a document such as a client contact report, but through the constant policing of deadlines and financials using such tools as task lists, time sheets and estimates. The Traffic Manager also ensures that work is accurate through the provision of detailed job requirement information to the appropriate parties via change orders, progress reports and media details. The careful daily monitoring of all jobs through the various integrated agency disciplines from their inception to their completion is the ultimate responsibility of the Traffic Manager.

A central traffic system, overseen by an employee whose sole responsibility is its ongoing maintenance, can save your agency valuable time. By making client information that was once segregated available to all employees from the convenience of their desktops, it makes possible increased billable time through increased productivity. Task, time and expense management, client access to materials posted to the Internet, and the archiving and instant retrieval of job-specific information, are among the many indispensable features of a good web-based traffic system.

Every employee within an agency plays an integral role in its workflow processes. Through the combination of an efficient web-based traffic system, managerial commitment and team member dedication, your organization can experience unparalleled efficiency and profitability.

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