

Title:

Advertising Agency Software: What You Need to Know

Word Count:

546

Summary:

An advertising agency performs a wide variety of services for their clients and will need several different types of software applications to accomplish them.

Keywords:

advertising agency software,ad agency software,extranet

Article Body:

There are many different types of software that an advertising agency needs to conduct business efficiently. Here are some examples of tasks that can be supported by software that is currently available to agencies:

- Create estimates and quotes, invoices and schedules for client approval
- Prepare drafts of a new brochure, print ad, or annual report for review
- Manage client feedback on direct mail materials
- Track key project milestone dates
- Prepare and review media plans
- Prepare a storyboard presentation for a client
- Prepare market research
- Schedule project tasks
- Review rough cuts
- Create project timelines
- Manage external client and prospect requests
- Schedule media
- Time tracking
- Track expenses against estimates
- Plan and analyze resources usage
- Accounting and bookkeeping

To meet these needs, an advertising agency should consider the following:

Graphic Design Software - The agency will need a creative design Application Suite like Macromedia Design Suite or Adobe Creative Suite to do the basic graphic design, storyboarding and other more creative aspects of producing

advertising material.

Audio and Video Editing Software - If they do the mockups of their radio and television commercials in-house they will need to be able to edit them for client review before they turn everything over to the actual production company that produces the final versions.

Office Applications - Most companies use Microsoft Office for word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software since it has become the standard for businesses.

Contact Manager - The agency needs a good contact manager to keep track of all of their client information. Larger agencies may want to opt for a sophisticated customer relations management (CRM) system instead.

Email Client - An agency needs a good email client. Although there are a lot of good email clients available, Outlook is the business standard and has scheduling capabilities for meetings, distribution lists, public folders, the ability to flag all correspondence from specific individual clients and basic content management capabilities.

Project management, Time & Expense Tracking Software - because they work on individual projects, an agency needs software that can track all of the costs associated with each project. The software should be able to track employee time with the ability to use split rates and multiple rates, raw materials, outsourced invoices, etc.

Accounting Software - They need standard accounting software that provides invoicing, accounts receivable, accounts payable and general ledger functions. Larger agencies may need the software to handle multiple currencies and tax codes.

New Possibilities

With the advent of extranets, special software suites have been developed specifically for advertising agencies. They include programs that can provide contact management, time & expense tracking, project management, scheduling and email management. Some of the applications can even interface directly with the firm's accounting software.

Another innovation is the client service extranet. They have replaced email as the favored forum for sharing and organizing the vast number of documents that are part of all client/agency relationships.

Using an extranet allows all employees, vendors, suppliers, clients and others on the project team to have real time access to all of the pertinent project details from anywhere in the world. Best of all, an extranet makes it possible to share the design documents, audio and video clips with the project online in real time. No more waiting for courier delivery or a face-to-face meeting providing better customer service than ever before possible.