

Q. Are you considering these steps? Can you deal with a quality workflow process to optimize your business? Are the short cuts you are taking hurting your business?
 Q. Are you will to outline some process/a work flow & the information you want in order to better understand the systems you need to better run your business?
 Observation: All too often we observe business don't want to take thoughtful steps in order to plan for the right systems choices. The end up hurting themselves by rushing into a systems purchase (another short cut) in the hopes of a "quick fix". For lack of a quality specification up front, either the wrong system is chosen, the implementation lacks follow through, or worse the business owner can't or won't understand and or support the system for a quality implementation.

A. Recommendation: Confront your current business practices & make improvements. Get into the details. Adopt a quality work flow process and anticipate the info. that you need. Be willing to learn something new. Use your specifications to properly compare systems choices. Always get references on both the VAR & the software. Follow up on the references. Unwilling to do the work required? If you can't then stay where you are. 50/50 chance the new systems implementation will NOT meet your expectations. Don't generalize, get into the details. You will be glad you did. We can help. We already have by giving you a work flow template to work from.

Example Creative Co. Workflow

Application:

Track The Sales Effort:

RFP or Sales calls take place. A sales forecast, broken down by client, by month, is tracked in Excel and shared in weekly meetings. Sales are tracked regarding stage and likelihood. Dollars are tracked. Revenue forecasts tie into sales effort. Revenue forecasts & expense budgets are entered and tracked in the job cost accounting software. Current month & YTD actual vs. budget income statements are monitored each month (see accounting below). Quarterly incentive compensation can be awarded base upon exceeding revenue targets.

Estimate (Qualify) Job (Profitability):

Compose Job Costing & Pricing. Pricing must agree to the Client Service Agreements ("CSAs") below. This is called a Job Costing Sheet. Detail Design & Project Mgt Labor hours are needed. Also Detail Vendor Requisitioning (Cost). This may have to involve a breakdown only to be seen internally. Clients see estimates on a rolled up basis by deliverable. Qualify Job Profit Margin(s) & Profit realization. Decide to take the job and sometimes more importantly NOT to take the job. (labor cost & standard revenue rates are calculated by employee, used, tracked, & incorporated into profit calculations which drive job profit analysis in the job cost accounting system.

Costing sheets & CSAs are shared over the server w. staff. Job Estimates & Client Service Agreements ("CSAs") (& client Pos/Change order) are located on the server for monitoring. Quotes & CSAs can be custom designed, printed (or e-mailed), & databased in the JC Accounting Software. Or Excel or Word can be used.

Present Proposal to The Client:

Present CSAs/PO or Change order info. to clients. Obtain Signature. A copy goes to project management. The scope of work is documented in either a CSA or the client's PO/Change order - all signed. And the CSA/PO/Change order must tie back to cost sheet where profit margins are confirmed. Quotes & CSAs can be custom designed, printed (or e-mailed), & databased in the JC Accounting Software. Or Excel or Word can be used.

Open Jobs w. the push of a button from Approved Proposals:

Create Client Profile in Shared Database. Input or create Approved Estimate (summaries) in Job Cost Accounting Software. Job cost & revenue estimate info become job budgets automatically.

Schedule & Prepare Billings to Clients:

Input Billing schedule into AR from contracts. Create as unposted progress billings or sales orders. Or billings can be done off the estimate (multiple times), or from work-in-progress spreadsheet via the system, or straight from the job module w. or w/o markups and overrides.

Sales using Excel
Via Excel & Or
Via Job Cost Accounting Software Estimate Record
Word & Or
Or Job Cost Accounting Software Estimate Layout
Job Cost Accounting System

Even if job billings are flat, per contract (eg: 33/33/33 or 50/50) use a WIP management feature to ensure all job costs have been considered (are covered) in the billing process. Accounting system must use a WIP management feature on a job by job basis.

Input "Notes" on estimate - e.g.: timing & when & how to bill

Render Job Budget hours to designers
Budgeted hours are compared to actual in job reports

Make jobs from estimates with the push of a button

Make estimate revisions & update jobs as needed. This includes additional scope of work for change orders, TBD items, and "one-off" billing matters associated with existing contracts.

Monthly Billings are posted & mailed using the job cost accounting software

Input "Notes" on jobs including progress & delivery dates....

Control & Monitor Job Costs & Profit:

Create Vendor Profiles in Job Cost Database

Populate jobs with Vendor Requisitions (using the est info from the costing process)

Populate jobs with Vendor POs (using the est info from costing process)

Vendors are instructed to reference PO #s in their bills. This includes freelancers. No PO# no payment.

Staff Populate jobs with time. This includes everyone - the owner & project managers too.

Time is posted each week by a manager who scans time by employee for completeness.

Enter vendor bills against P.O.s. Any difference is flagged and follow up takes place.

Input "Notes" on Pos e.g. delivery date & other info.

Project Management of Cost - (AP & JC)

Monitoring:
(job level) Requisitions
 Pos, Outstanding Pos aged
 Time
 Vendor Bills

Project Management of Profit - (JC)

Job Cost/Revenue/Profit Monitoring
(using job profit reports & ledgers)

Accounting - (AP & GL)

Accounts Payable & Disbursements
Payroll
Accounts Payable - Overall Monitoring (generates reports re AP agings...)

Accounting - (AR)

Accounts Receivable - Overall Monitoring (generates reports re AR agings & cash position)
Accounts Receivable - Job Level Monitoring
Accounts Receivable - Collections

Billing Meetings:
Example

Accounting - (AR & GL)

Input "Notes" on AR invoices RE collection efforts

Overall Budgeting, Financial Statements & Tax Planning. Includes Mly & YTD Actual vs. Budget reporting & monitoring.

ON THE LAST THURSDAY BILLING MEETING, EACH MONTH-END, PM & ACCOUNTING
RECAP WHAT'S BILLED FOR THE RECENT MONTH, WHAT'S EARNED & WHAT'S YET TO BE
BILLED FOR THAT MONTH. DITTO ON THE COST OF SALES. THIS MEETING MUST TAKE PLACE (CAN'T BE
SKIPPED), IN THE LAST WEEK, THUR, EA. MONTH WITH THE STAFF PREPARED W/ JOB PROFIT REPORTS - SUMMARY & DETAIL & AR.