BRANDED3
company success story

INDUSTRY: Digital marketing agency
LOCATION: Leeds, England
PREVIOUS SOLUTION: 10,000ft Plans

BRANDED3

Company overview:

Branded3 is a leading search marketing agency that leverages audience engagement to grow client brands online. Based in Leeds, England, Branded3 is a member of the St. Ives Group whose strategic marketing businesses provide world-class capabilities across three growth areas: data, digital and consulting. Branded3 customers include Ladbrokes, Vue Entertainment, Travelex, Betfair and many others. Founded in 2003, the agency has grown from 20 employees in 2003 to more than 70 today, and has expanded from its original base in Leeds to open additional offices in London and Bath. Branded3 provides an integrated menu of services from website development to search marketing campaigns covering SEO, paid media, digital PR,social media, content marketing, analytics and training.

> "Clarizen provided the level of flexibility we needed from a system in our industry; the support during deployment was second to none and enabled us to become self-sufficient."
>
> — David Smith, Operations Director - BRANDED3

The challenge:

Branded3 was acquired by the St. Ives Group in 2013, and began to grow at a rapid pace. According to Operations Director David Smith, the company's long-time project planning application, 10,000ft Plans, could no longer support the agency's expanding roster of clients. "We needed a solution that gave us a clear visibility of workloads,

budgets and efficiency," he notes. The firm relied on a number of disparate systems, including Excel spreadsheets, Google Docs, and time tracking applications, all of which required too much manual entry and cross correlation. Project managers had little or no insight across projects, collaboration was difficult, report quality was inconsistent, time tracking and budgeting were highly inflexible, and integration among key applications was almost nonexistent.

The solution:

In early 2016, Branded3 formed an evaluation team to look for a project and portfolio management (PPM) solution that better matched the firm's growing needs. The team looked closely at three top cloud-based PPM solutions: Clarizen, Workfront and TrafficLive. A cloud-based solution offered the small agency ease of implementation since it would not require the purchase and installation of software.

Branded3 chose Clarizen for its superior flexibility and adaptability. "We can do so much with Clarizen such as configuring customer data fields to better represent the data we want to see in our reporting dashboards," Smith explains. "We can constantly change and adapt the platform to our new processes. Clarizen ticked all the boxes for us."

A Clarizen Customer Success Manager helped Branded3 get a fast start. "Clarizen understood our business needs and invested time and effort to help us configure an environment exactly tailored to our requirements," says Smith. "We felt a great sense of trust and mutual agreement. The implementation was outstanding, especially in the face of our demanding requests and constant questions."

Learn how Clarizen's work collaboration solution can help you. Sign up for an introductory webinar today.

The results:

According to Branded3 Project Manager Andrew Radburn, the agency began using Clarizen in March 2016 and within two months had every client, project, and team member on the system. He blogged about the company's success with Clarizen, noting ten key reasons "we love using Clarizen", including:

- ✓ **Sophisticated interface** — Clarizen's homepage provides the firm's project teams with instant access to the latest project tasks and messages. "In comparison to other project management tools I have worked with, Clarizen provides easy access to the data I require without having to drill down multiple navigations or menus, and you can tailor your views and information to your own tastes without affecting anyone else."

- ✓ **Agile scheduling** — "As a project manager working in a busy and fast-paced agency, you've got to embrace that change comes with the territory. The Clarizen resource loader view makes it easy to consider available capacity at an individual level and make necessary changes on the fly, plus tasks can be reassigned at the click of a button."

- ✓ **Collaboration between teams** — Branded3 now has true integration and shared ownership of tasks. The system highlights the great work that the firm's teams are doing and helps team members understand the impact of their efforts. "Rather than storing files in multiple systems and different locations, we now have the ability to add briefing guidelines and finalized outputs such as Word files or PSD designs to individual tasks that everyone can access in one location."

- ✓ **Communication** — The firm now has an integrated discussion system that helps enable the collaboration noted above by providing a unified messaging platform that streamlines project management and workflow.

- ✓ **Project plans and timing** — Setting up project plans in Clarizen is simple and easy to do "right out of the box". The Gantt chart view enables a breakdown of projects into milestones and tasks, allowing Branded3 project managers to assign a budget and resource to each. "With accurate timings and dates, these charts can be sent for client review with a few keystrokes, and we no longer have to use additional software to create timing plans – something we could have only dreamed of before Clarizen."

- ✓ **Integration with other systems/plug-ins** — While Clarizen was built from the ground up to support collaborative work management, there are instances when Branded3 needs to use other tools or software to get other work done. Clarizen can easily integrate with more than 100 other apps, which comes in handy since Branded3 also uses JIRA task management, Google Docs, SharePoint, Trello and other productivity tools.

- ✓ **Reporting** — "Reports are a powerful feature of Clarizen," Radburn emphasizes. "You can build almost any variation to get a finer level of detail. At anytime within a project, you can see the budgeted, incurred and future scheduled time. I have saved a lot of time by having a set of reports I frequently use saved within my personal view."

- ✓ **Visibility** — Clarizen has enabled Branded3 to more closely align the needs of Project Managers and Account Managers and allow both teams to work more closely. Everyone within the wider team has access to Clarizen and can view everything they need, which better supports the fluid nature of projects and the mix of skills required to accomplish the work.

The results (cont.)

✓ **Time tracking** — In the fast-paced Branded3 environment, team members are often working on multiple projects simultaneously making it extra difficult to not only keep track of progress, but also the time spent on individual projects. "It's important for us as a business to be able to accurately log our time and track how much a project team collectively spends in order to keep within the time allocation and budget. Clarizen's time and expense tracking is built-in and can help shine the light on project efficiency. Branded3's David Smith notes, "Clarizen has definitely helped open our eyes in terms of thinking which teams were efficient and profitable and which were not. We've seen a 20 percent improvement in efficiency across our retained client base in the last six months."

✓ **Sense of community** — Branded3 appreciates Clarizen's commitment to its user community. "It's nice to know that Clarizen shares a similar goal of connecting the industry," says Radburn. "They regularly host customer meet-ups to offer a forum to share feedback and stories on implementation." He also appreciates the expert advice and collaboration provided by the online Clarizen Labs collective knowledge base.

Bottom line:

Branded3's Operations Director Smith notes, "For senior management, we have been able to provide efficiency and progress reporting. Our leadership team has the visibility they need to make business decisions based on accurate information. Our finance team can invoice on projects with confidence and accuracy. We have saved money on purchasing other systems and software due to the flexibility and business value that Clarizen brings."

He adds, "We are reaping the benefits of deploying Clarizen in our business, including a 73% reduction in our client attrition rate in the first year and greater awareness and understanding of what makes our teams and accounts profitable."

clarizen

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— David Smith, Operations Director - BRANDED3

ABOUT CLARIZEN

Clarizen is a collaborative work management solution built on a secure, scalable platform and designed to create a meaningful engagement experience that allows everyone to work the way they work best. When employees can connect to a larger and more meaningful purpose, progress is not only clear, it's accelerated.

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