



Case study: Brazen Synergist: making a significant impact on a PR agency's bottom line.

The background

Brazen was established in 2001 with a 'think big' mission to become the most successful independent consumer PR consultancy outside London. Based in Manchester, the agency has won over 45 industry awards, and, in early 2009, has a turnover approaching £2m and employs 25 staff.

The challenge

Associate Group Director, Rick Guttridge joined Brazen in 2004. At this time, the agency didn't have an overall computer-based job costing system. "We had a package for accounts which we still use, and we were using systems which were paper-based, and also spreadsheets," said Rick.

There were a number of motivators for Brazen's management board deciding to look at changing this. Rick commented, "One of the key drivers in getting in a new system was increased efficiency and making sure that nothing was missed."

They were also looking to have slicker processes, and wanted information on campaigns to be accessible to everyone at the agency.

The search

Once a decision to have a new system had been made, Brazen started researching options. "We asked around a few big agencies and found out what others were using," said Rick. They also did other research and went on to meet with several companies to find out more about relevant packages that were available.

In the end, their unanimous decision was to go with Synergist from Express Systems. There were several reasons for this, as Rick identifies. "It did everything we wanted it to, and you can add to it. We were able to speak to end users – who said it did everything they needed. It ticked all the boxes."



He also identified a good working relationship with Express Systems' director, Steve Vincent, as a key factor.

The service

Express Systems went on to arrange the installation in 2008 which, said Rick "was very smooth." They also carried out training for the Brazen team. Rick was impressed with their service, including how they were able to work well with the agency's existing IT support company.

The on-going service that Brazen has received has also been impressive. "The team on the [Synergist] helpline have always been very helpful. They're always quick and efficient too, so it's a good customer service. That's the key thing," said Rick.

The solution

Even though it was only installed just over 12 months ago, Brazen have found that having Synergist from Express Systems has already made a positive difference to their business.

"It has helped sharpen the minds of everyone in the business on the commercial side. It has also made everyone feel more involved," said Rick. In fact, Brazen staff can now see everything on a job including the costs against a project and the profit.

Rick praised the overall effectiveness of Synergist. "One of its other main benefits is that it's improved our profitability. Everything gets caught and logged. Nothing gets through the net now."

Synergist has made other differences too. "We also have a time sheet system now, which we didn't have before, so it's helping us to monitor the over-servicing of clients."

It has helped Brazen in terms of estimating when they're pitching, as well as speeding up a number of internal processes. They're also able to see at a glance where they are with existing customers.

The result

Rick summed up the main benefits that Synergist from Express Systems has provided for Brazen. "It has made a significant impact on the bottom line... [and] made us a more efficient and commercially-aware business at all levels."