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**Creative Agency
Management Software:
A Comparison Guide**

We Know How Agencies WorkSM

Introduction

Project management tools and platforms are proliferating at a dizzying rate in today's marketplace. Choosing the right tool and process can be a challenge for any organization, but it may be particularly vexing for creative teams and agencies, whose business success can stand or fall on the basis of effective project and account management.

With the huge variations in price, features and capabilities, how can creative team managers or executives effectively evaluate their options for agency and project management software?

In order to make that process a little easier, we've done some legwork for you. In this report, you'll see exactly how the project and agency management platforms on the market today compare in function and features.





But Wait, Isn't Workamajig Biased?

Let's deal with the elephant in the room right now: while we admit we think our software is best-in-class, we also know that not every tool is the right fit for every company. Factors such as size, budget, and even industry can make one team's best option another team's not-so-good option. We pride ourselves on building long-running and successful relationships with every one of our clients and we believe that every successful relationship is built on a foundation of honesty.

That's why we've done our best to provide an objective assessment of the options on the market: to help creative teams understand what the software options out there today really offer and what solution will offer the best for what an individual team might need.

Note: many agencies begin by looking for project management software, and so we've included some project management platforms in our assessment. However, we have found more and more that project management software by itself rarely fixes the problem that sent an agency looking for it. Instead, we evaluated each platform for its ability to offer end-to-end management of a typical creative team's total list of needs.

The Platforms:

10,000 Feet

10,000 Feet, usually referred to as 10K', has a few different price points depending on the end usage. Packages are sold in groups of 10 users.

The 10K' platform offers some options for project management and resource management. Users have the ability to send digital proofs, but will miss out on accounting and reporting capabilities offered by a few of its competitors. Companies purchasing 10K' should also budget for a full-service accounting and finance platform as well.

Advantage

Advantage is a powerful tool with a lot of project management features, including time tracking and traffic monitoring. On top of that, the platform offers users the chance to forecast revenues, which can be valuable when determining future spend.

As a project management and revenue forecasting engine, Advantage is a strong player. However, as a complete agency and project management tool, Advantage is not complete or truly robust without expensive additional software to fill in resource and client management gaps.

Creative agencies are project-heavy, client-facing businesses by necessity, making these gaps a serious and often costly flaw in the Advantage platform. It is unwise and nearly impossible for an agency to function without reliable resource and client management tools, meaning that any platform not offering them will also add on cost through the need to source these elsewhere.

Advantage also misses on other key points, with users reporting a lack of SSO and API capability and an often-complicated interface that can require costly ongoing consulting to implement and use.

AtTask (Workfront)

Workfront (formerly known as AtTask) offers a multi-tiered system, ranging from a basic level with limited capabilities and tech support availability, to a premium version that touts enhanced features and round the clock support.

The lack of full features at a similar price point to some of the other platforms sets Workfront back a bit in the overall standings. It does still have some of the basic tenets for project management and collaboration though.

If all you need is project management, AtTask can do the job. With minimal integration or function for the other management tasks that agencies must handle, though, it may come up short for those in search of more than a task list.

BaseCamp

Unlike some of the other platforms for project management, BaseCamp is priced by project, not by user. The platform offers some basic project management capabilities, including traffic tracking and collaboration options.

BaseCamp is a much-loved and effective project and task management option but is limited only to project management. With no integration to finance, CRM, or other critical account and business management tools, BaseCamp captures only a thin piece of the agency management big picture.

Clients & Profits

With Clients and Profits, each user is treated differently: a creative has fewer project management capabilities than a marketing and communications staff member, and the cost is reflected in the level of access.

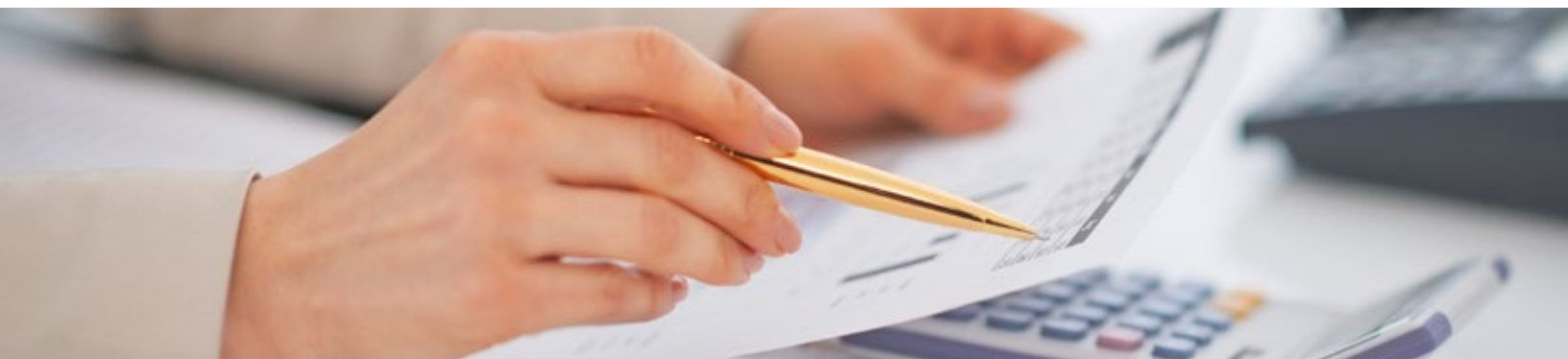
Like Workamajig, Clients & Profits provides the ability to select user types and roles and provides support for management across many functions. However, its reporting tools may lack the ability to generate actionable and accurate forecasts that play a critical role in agency planning.

Function Point

Like a few of its competitors, Function Point offers pricing on a per user scale. It also offers a discount for creative firms that are willing to prepay annually. Optional add-ons are available for a price to improve cross-platform integration with existing accounting and collaboration tools.

While the add-ons do indeed increase functionality of Function Point, they can be costly. Without the optional fp.Accountant add-on, there is no option to integrate accounting tools. Even with it, Function Point will limit integration to QuickBooks. A lack of built-in accounting function means that there is no easy way for agencies using Function point to build the spend, productivity, and ROI reports that are critical to successfully running a creative organization.

Even with a jump in price, Function Point does not support integration with financial and accounting management and is not built to serve as a truly complete agency management platform. Managers looking for an integrated solution should be wary of added costs for limited benefits.





TimeFox (time reporting and project management from FunctionFox)

While it may appear that TimeFox is limited to time tracking, there is a basic platform that offers little more than time and project reporting. There are also two additional levels that bring it closer in line to the other creative project management platforms.

The full platform includes much of what is needed for in-house creative teams to begin project tracking, with the serious exception of revenue forecasting and digital proofing capabilities. It does offer project costs and expense tracking, as well as integration with QuickBooks.

While TimeFox does facilitate project tracking, it is not designed for overall agency or even department management, with limits on forecasting and financial integration. Lack of digital proofing and change management also make this a poor choice for teams who need to deal with change and revision requests on a regular basis.

LiquidPlanner

When buying a LiquidPlanner package, there are three different plans with various platform capabilities.

The main difference between the three platforms is that API access and reporting features are not included in the Standard plan, only the Professional and Enterprise plan. Additionally, the Enterprise plan includes expense tracking. Overall, the LiquidPlanner platform is similar to many of its competitors, but isn't breaking the glass ceiling like a few of the frontrunners in the project management platform arena. It also lacks the dedication to creative project management, and instead attempts to span categories as a general project management software.

Agencies looking for a general-purpose project management option may find what they are looking for in LiquidPlanner. However, the need to generalize means that common creative agency processes and needs may require complex workarounds and additional software.

Mavenlink

Mavenlink offers another tiered project management platform. There are four tiers to choose from, starting at the Teams level and ranging through to an Enterprise solution.

The Teams level is competitively priced with many of the other project management platforms, and as such offers very basic functionality. It misses the higher level reporting capabilities, and does not integrate well with other software suites. As the cost and tier increases, the software capabilities do as well. On the high end, the Enterprise level of platform allows project managers and executives to utilize customized reports, as well as the reporting and tracking functions available in the Premier version.

The extra spend required to obtain basic required functions like customized reporting and basic finance management make Mavenlink a costly option for the limited function it provides.

MSPProject

A perennial powerhouse in all things software, Microsoft's project management platform offering follows along with many of the other programs in the MSOffice suite. MSPProject requires a minimum of 15 users, and features such as project management reporting and CRM require additional fees.

It should not come as a surprise that many of the important project management features are available from MSPProject. Reporting, forecasting, and tracking tools are all at a project manager's disposal. However, like many other powerful Microsoft products, the user interface can be challenging.

An important disadvantage for MSPProject is that Microsoft designed it to work for all types of project management needs. While this is valuable for many managers, it lacks nuance for the finer points of creative project management and doesn't always take the specialized processes and policies of creative teams into account. Because it is so brand and project focused, MSPProject also lacks smooth CRM integration, media management, and complete finance and accounting reporting tools, making this a poor choice for anyone not planning on a Microsoft-exclusive platform.

NetSuite

There is a bit of mystique surrounding NetSuite. It is difficult to find information regarding price, users, or features, although the platform seems to be capable. NetSuite focuses on doing some things well, instead of doing everything.

Similar to MSPProject, the NetSuite project management platform is not exclusively tailored towards creative firms. That means that the accounting and reporting functions, while nice, can be slightly cumbersome when trying to customize towards creative project management and processes.

ProofHQ

Not exactly a fully-fledged PM platform, ProofHQ is now under the Workfront umbrella as a digital proofing software. Prices are based on the number of proofs needed, starting at 20 and extending to an unlimited number with a customizable price range depending on total users and firm throughput.

As expected, ProofHQ does not offer much more than collaboration and digital proofing. The project management software is not so much a platform but a software piece designed to integrate with Workfront to provide additional functionality.

Robohead

Comparable to many other budding project management platforms, Robohead has kept its pricing and user scale under wraps. Generally, it is similar to Function Point or BaseCamp in both pricing and features, making it a potentially robust task management platform but little more. For agencies who only need task management and have a completely functional set of processes in place for accounting, resource management, resource forecasting, change management, and other mission-critical tasks, Robohead can be a solid choice, but otherwise is unlikely to satisfy.

TrafficLIVE (offered by Deltek)

On paper, TrafficLIVE should be able to knock creative project management out of the park, since its parent company Deltek is one of the leaders in general project management software. However, when compared to many of the other creative-specific platforms, it often falls quite short.

The basic TrafficLIVE platform lacks reporting and accounting capabilities, and limits project management capabilities as well. Only by adding in Deltek (and increasing the monthly cost per user), can a project manager open up project management functionality, plus collaboration and accounting functions. This makes TrafficLIVE both costlier than it initially seems and much more complicated to implement.





Workamajig

Workamajig was designed specifically for creative agency management from a consulting and best-practice development background. Scalable for any size of team from five active users to a full enterprise-level organization, it is currently the only product currently on the market that is purpose-designed to serve as the only software an agency or creative team needs besides the creative tools themselves.

In addition to all the standard primary project management requirements, Workamajig includes reporting, accounting, resource management, change management, client management, and workflow tools that integrate every department and team member in one system for easy reporting and visibility into processes and progress.

While Workamajig has no generic API, it is designed to provide full function without one and already has existing APIs in place for areas where the system structure makes it necessary.

Workzone

Even though it is holding down the last spot when sorted alphabetically, Workzone still puts up a strong showing as a project management platform. Pricing is based upon many factors, so users will need to schedule a consultation before they can receive an accurate quote.

The downside to Workzone is the lack of higher-level functionality, including accounting and reporting work. It might stand out as one of the mid-pack platforms with digital proofing and traffic monitoring, but doesn't have that extra push to get it up in the range of some of the stronger software groups, such as Workamajig.

The Feature Categories

Certainly, every project management platform has areas where it could improve, and others where it really shines. Here is a quick showcase of the features that many creative project managers and agencies find important, and where each platform lies on the spectrum.



Project Management and Collaboration

While it should be expected that most of these creative management platforms offer full support for project management, that's not always the case. A project management platform should also allow for collaboration as much as possible, and nearly all of the options offer this feature.

Company	Project Management
Workamajig	Yes
10,000 Feet	Yes
Advantage	Yes
At Task (AKA Workfront)	Yes
BaseCamp	Yes
Clients & Profits	Yes
Function Point	Yes
FunctionFox	Yes
Liquid Planner	Yes
Mavenlink	Limited
MS Workbook	Yes
NetSuite	Yes
Proof HQ	No
Robohead	Yes
Traffic Live/Deltek	Limited
Workzone	Yes

With ProofHQ, the intention was to be integrated into Workforce, so the lack of project management is obvious but it still offers the opportunity for collaboration. TrafficLIVE has quite limited project management and collaboration tools in the basic version, but when used alongside Deltek it increases to where the other platforms reside. Mavenlink is the one outlier, allowing project management but not giving any ability for collaboration among the users and creative teams.



CRM

This is a category that splits the field right down the middle. Most of the platforms that have more than basic functionality include CRM on the list of offered features, and rightfully so. There are a few that offer integration with Salesforce, which can come in handy for any potential customers that already are using the CRM platform but will be a limiting factor without it.

Company	CRM Integration
Workamajig	Yes
10,000 Feet	No
Advantage	Yes
At Task (AKA Workfront)	No
BaseCamp	No
Clients & Profits	Yes
Function Point	Yes
FunctionFox	No
Liquid Planner	SalesForce only
Mavenlink	SalesForce only
MS Workbook	Yes
NetSuite	Yes
Proof HQ	No
Robohead	No
Traffic Live/Deltek	Deltek only
Workzone	No

LiquidPlanner and Mavenlink both provide Salesforce integration, which is the second best thing to offering a full CRM package, and TrafficLIVE again relies on the big brother Deltek to take care of CRM.



Time Tracking

Most platforms have the ability to keep track of time spent on project-related tasks. However, any system that does not integrate with accounting is liable to under-report or obscure the real cost of labor as payroll costs are not built into databases. This can result in chronic under-charging that leads over time to serious reductions in profit margin.

After all, a project manager will usually want to have some background knowledge of which creative is working on which task, and how long everybody is spending on their specific responsibilities.

Company	Time Tracking
Workamajig	Yes
10,000 Feet	Yes
Advantage	Yes
At Task (AKA Workfront)	No
BaseCamp	No
Clients & Profits	Yes
Function Point	Yes
FunctionFox	Yes
Liquid Planner	Yes
Mavenlink	Yes
MS Workbook	Yes
NetSuite	Unknown
Proof HQ	Unknown
Robohead	Yes
Traffic Live/Deltek	Yes
Workzone	Yes

The notable exceptions are BaseCamp and Workfront. While these platforms are somewhat basic, they have other features that would suggest that leaving out time tracking was somewhat of an oversight during development.



Traffic Monitoring

Because deadlines are so often tight and work is so often piled on, reliable traffic monitoring is a must-have in any agency's toolbox. This is another category that divides the platforms considerably.

Company	Traffic
Workamajig	Yes
10,000 Feet	No
Advantage	Yes
At Task (AKA Workfront)	No
BaseCamp	Yes
Clients & Profits	Yes
Function Point	Yes
FunctionFox	No
Liquid Planner	No
Mavenlink	No
MS Workbook	Yes
NetSuite	Unknown
Proof HQ	Unknown
Robohead	Yes
Traffic Live/Deltek	Yes
Workzone	Yes

Many of the simpler platforms, unsurprisingly, don't offer traffic monitoring. Somewhat surprising are both BaseCamp, that actually does offer the feature, and 10K', which leaves the option out of an otherwise fairly well-stacked management platform.



Digital Proofing and Online Deliverables

The ability to easily send digital proofs or other deliverables to the client makes a creative project team much more efficient. Feedback submission and quick turnaround help keep happy clients, and help to keep a creative team operating smoothly.

Company	Digital Proofing / Deliverables
Workamajig	Yes
10,000 Feet	Yes
Advantage	Yes
At Task (AKA Workfront)	No
BaseCamp	Yes
Clients & Profits	Unknown
Function Point	Yes
FunctionFox	No
Liquid Planner	No
Mavenlink	No
MS Workbook	Yes
NetSuite	Unknown
Proof HQ	Yes
Robohead	Limited
Traffic Live/Deltek	Deltek
Workzone	Yes

It's important to note that Workfront relies on ProofHQ to provide this feature. Other platforms that fall short in this category are LiquidPlanner, Mavenlink, and TimeFox. Again, TrafficLIVE has the capability when combined with Deltek. In addition to standard digital proofing, Workamajig's integrated system feeds comments directly back into the project plan as to-do items automatically assigned to the responsible team member for revision.



Media, Accounting, Revenue Forecasting, and Reporting

On paper, these are four separate categories; however, the platforms seem split down the middle on them. The project management platforms that reside more on the basic side of things don't offer any of these features without an add-on or integration with third-party software. The more powerful platforms take care of all four, with the exception of Clients & Profits that lacks Revenue Forecasting.

Company	Media	Accounting	Reporting	Revenue Forecasting
Workamajig	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10,000 Feet	No	No	No	No
Advantage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
At Task (AKA Workfront)	No	No	No	No
BaseCamp	No	No	No	No
Clients & Profits	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Function Point	No	No - QB	PM only	No
FunctionFox	No	No	Client/Project/Status	No
Liquid Planner	No	No	Baseline reporting	No
Mavenlink (purchased by Workbook?)	No	No	No	No
MS Workbook	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes
NetSuite	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Unknown
Proof HQ	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Robohead	No	No	PM only	No
Traffic Live/Deltek	No	Deltek	Deltek	No
Workzone	Unknown	No	Workload only	No

Advantage and Workamajig score full marks here, with their capabilities spanning all of the features in question. Clients & Profits misses the Revenue Forecasting, but still maintains Accounting, Media, and Reporting capabilities, and MSPProject cannot manage accounting or media, nor is its revenue forecasting complete as it tracks only projects and not other sources such as retainers.



Single Sign-On

When considering some of the more exotic features of project management platforms, having SSO functionality is one option that comes to mind. While not essential by any stretch of the imagination, it becomes quite important and useful when implemented properly.

Company	Single Sign-on
Workamajig	Yes
10,000 Feet	Unknown
Advantage	Unknown
At Task (AKA Workfront)	Unknown
BaseCamp	Unknown
Clients & Profits	Unknown
Function Point	No
FunctionFox	No
Liquid Planner	No
Mavenlink (purchased by Workbook?)	No
MS Workbook	Yes
NetSuite	Unknown
Proof HQ	No
Robohead	Unknown
Traffic Live/Deltek	Yes
Workzone	Unknown

Both MSProject and Workamajig distinguish themselves even more out front, as Advantage and Clients & Profits failed to include this feature. Unsurprisingly TrafficLIVE (and therefore Deltek as well) offers single sign-on as well.



API and Integration with Other Platforms

When the development team declines to work on a specific feature above for the actual platform, at least having integration with other platforms helps to ease the pain. The ability to coordinate across platforms can turn a minimalistic project management program into a more powerful platform.

Company	API / Integration
Workamajig	Yes
10,000 Feet	Yes
Advantage	Unknown
At Task (AKA Workfront)	Yes
BaseCamp	Unknown
Clients & Profits	No
Function Point	Yes
FunctionFox	Unknown
Liquid Planner	Yes - Salesforce, Zapier, Dropbox and others
Mavenlink (purchased by Workbook?)	Yes - QB, SF, Google, MS, NetSuite & Jira
MS Workbook	Unknown
NetSuite	Unknown
Proof HQ	Yes
Robohead	No
Traffic Live/Deltek	Yes
Workzone	Unknown

With the exception of Robohead, most of the project management platforms that have limitations on features include the ability to integrate with other software. ProofHQ and Workfront are an obvious example, as well as TrafficLIVE (to integrate seamlessly with Deltek). Of notable importance is the fact that Clients & Profits is the only platform in the top five that falls short in this category.



Conclusion:

No system is a perfect fit for every agency. An element as simple as color or font choice can swing a decision between two brands.

What can be objectively assessed, however, is the hard data on what a tool has to offer. When looking for a solution that can answer the needs of any creative team or agency, Workamajig offers more: it's just a fact.

WHAT CAN WORKAMAJIG DO FOR YOU?

*We know how agencies work.*SM