

SUCCESS STORY



PROFILE

Robert Berning Productions and its sister company, Berning Marketing, provide creative communications and marketing solutions to a diverse group of clients including Fortune 500 corporations, entrepreneurial start-ups and the public sector. Based in New Orleans, the 20-person agency differentiates itself by offering a broad range of affordable marketing, media and creative production services under one roof — either a la carte, as turnkey services or as integrated campaigns.

INDUSTRY

Advertising, Marketing,
Corporate Communications

QUICKBASE APPLICATION

Operations management, work order tracking, media asset catalog, sales lead management

WHO'S USING QUICKBASE

All RBP staffers use QuickBase daily.

Intuit QuickBase

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The Challenge:

- Paper-based work order system was time consuming and costly
- Inconsistent or incomplete data entry hampered job flow
- Company growth was impeded by labor-intensive processes

The Solution:

- Three QuickBase applications: Operations Management, Online Media Asset Library, Sales Lead Management
- Web-based system for quick access to resource scheduling, work order processing, customer history and employee time tracking
- Automated work order process with on-demand reports
- Automated email alerts triggered to flag critical deadlines, inform clients

The Results:

- 50 staff hours per month are saved in staff meetings
- Four staff hours per month are reclaimed by eliminating manual work order distribution
- Incidences of misplaced or incomplete work orders are eliminated
- Less time is spent processing work orders and more resources are focused on client work

Creative Communications Company Automates Operations with QuickBase

Robert Berning Productions (RBP) launched its business over 30 years ago with only three employees. Back then, it was RBP's broadcast and film expertise that drew clients to this successful agency. Today, its broad range of marketing, design, interactive and broadcast skills keeps the group humming, along with its commitment to delivering high-quality services that exceed client expectations.

As the business grew, RBP needed to replace its paper-based work orders with a streamlined operations management system. Not only was the paper-based system inefficient, but the printing of custom forms was expensive. In addition, incomplete or inaccurate orders cost the company time and money.

"We were using stacks of custom-printed and numbered forms to manage our work orders. Information was sometimes incomplete. A rush order could end up at the bottom of the stack," said Ed Metz, vice president and director of technical services at the company.

Paper-based orders had to be distributed manually from department to department. Weekly staff meetings were required to review all open work orders, costing the company about 50 hours each month of valuable staff time that could have been better used for client work. The time-consuming nature of the process put limits on how much work the agency could take on.

"It was tempting," said Metz, "to verbally execute orders because it was so taxing to fill out the paper form and distribute multiple copies to various departments."

QuickBase Functionality Steals the Show

RBP researched many software options for automating the work order system, including traditional database management and hosted workgroup application software. But it was QuickBase's functionality and its 30-day free trial offer with no restrictions that won the company over.

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THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE

“QuickBase gave us the right combination of features — affordability, ease of use and provider stability.”

“With a full 30-day free trial, we were able to quickly develop a fully functional model of our operations management system, which took about one minute to sell to RBP’s owner and founder, Robert Berning,” commented Metz.

Ease of use was important, since Metz is a filmmaker and photographer by trade — not an IT professional. “QuickBase made it easy for me to do what I wanted to with the software without having a lot of technical expertise. Compared to Microsoft Access or Filemaker, the ability to set up multiple related tables is a snap; Quickbase does much of the work for me. If I do have a question about a formula or report design, the active online Community Forum is a great resource,” he said.

QuickBase’s web-based, cross-browser functionality came in handy, too, as some RBP staff used PCs while others were on the Mac. In addition, Intuit’s reputation as a secure hosted application provider gave the company confidence that their data would be safeguarded long into the future.

Not only did the operations management system that Metz developed automate work orders, but it also streamlined overall operations for the company. Work orders are now linked to contracts, for simplified project management. Tasks are now easily viewed and managed, alerting managers when critical deadlines are approaching. Time cards track the resources used for each work order, so job estimates can be compared with actual time spent. Rate tables link to time cards for a streamlined billing process. Finally, a media asset catalog is linked to the work orders, reducing the time needed to locate relevant physical media assets when needed.

But RPB didn’t stop there. Metz also created a sales management application for lead nurturing and sales operations. He is currently working on a production management system to streamline activities in their busy film and video production department.

“From scouting locations, scheduling crew, ordering equipment, buying props to final wrap and delivery, QuickBase will put every detail of every job at our fingertips,” said Metz.

Winning Performance Commands Rave Reviews

Almost five years and 10,000 work orders later, RBP’s operations management system functions at the very core of its business process. Since 2003, the company has doubled its revenue and increased its staff to 20 to keep up with demand. On any given day, the agency may have as many as 40 open jobs and 300 active work orders — this would have crippled the old, paper-based work order system.

Weekly staff meetings are shorter and attended only by managers, leaving the rest of the staff available to focus on client work.

“I estimate that well over 50 work hours per month are saved in our staff meetings, plus an additional savings of four hours per month in walking-around “sneakernet” time!” remarked Metz.

Countless hours are recovered, now that work orders can be searched and retrieved online. Consistent data entry and required fields save time, compared to incomplete paper documents. Email reminders keep projects — and staff resources — on target. Web access to work orders and project data keeps employees productive from remote locations.

RBP clients benefit from the system, too. Email alerts are automatically sent to clients when a job is opened, so they know when work on their accounts has started. It’s an added level of customer communications made possible with QuickBase.

“QuickBase gave us the right combination of features — affordability, ease of use and provider stability,” said Metz. “Like most small companies, we do not have a dedicated IT team. With QuickBase, we are able to develop, maintain and upgrade our custom applications in-house as our service menu and business model evolves.”

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