Web Based Time Tracking and Project Management Solution for Small Creative Companies

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> - Corina Ludwig

CEOCFO: *Ms. Ludwig, what is the concept behind FunctionFox Systems?*
Ms. Ludwig: The concept behind FunctionFox is to help creative teams worldwide with their time tracking and project management needs. By using timesheet and project management tools like FunctionFox – these creative companies will be more successful.

CEOCFO: *What are some of the challenges for a creative company that might be different than another small business?*
Ms. Ludwig: When we first launched our business in 2001, the largest challenge was that web based applications was not something people were used to. They were not even doing their banking online, so that was the biggest barrier that we faced early on. Later on, the challenges were getting the right talent to add to our team and small challenges along the way that we were able to overcome.

CEOCFO: *You mentioned working with creative companies to focus on their work and stay creative. Are you looking at a particular type of business or do you mean creative in the most general terms?*
Ms. Ludwig: We define creative companies as companies that call themselves creative, which would be advertising, design, graphic design, multimedia, marketing and communications firms. That could extend as far as architects & engineers or anyone in a creative team environment that is in a larger sector such as in house marketing departments.

CEOCFO: *What are the challenges in tracking time?*
Ms. Ludwig: Traditionally it has always been that tracking time is something that people do not typically enjoy. Tracking time at the onset, tracking their budgets, looking at their projects overall from concept to completion, preventing overages and creating quick estimates all help with reporting on the work that they are doing. It is collecting time from all of their staff in a single solution that helps them read all the data in a concise and comprehensive way.

CEOCFO: *How do you make it easy for a company to do all of this?*
Ms. Ludwig: FunctionFox has developed an online platform, it's web based and is easy to access on a monthly subscription or annual subscription. Users can log in on a daily basis, track their time, manage their projects and estimates, pull reports, and FunctionFox helps do that in a seamless and easy way. We offer a user friendly interface, that is easy to set up, and users tend to not have many questions. If they do need help, we are there for them but ultimately it is a fairly straightforward product that lets them focus on their business rather than on the software itself.

CEOCFO: *What is involved in an implementation?*
Ms. Ludwig: Implementation can be as easy as a thirty minute set up or it could be a little bit more extensive for very large organizations. All the onboarding is complimentary and part of the service. Our team helps our customers and answer questions they have from the very first conversation right to fifteen years later when they are still using the service for new employees.

CEOCFO: *What are some of the features that are a bit unique to FunctionFox? What might you offer in features that companies do not take advantage of the way they should?*
Ms. Ludwig: There are many programs out there that help the creative industry. Instead of having all the bells and whistles and features that some of the other products out there have, we focused on simplicity and really narrow it down to the tools that creative professionals need. We have something that is called CEO desktop that give a bird's eye view of everything in the system and they are able to drill down, right down to the fine detail of a daily report. Other features that people love about our system is everything from resource allocation to detailed estimates, email notifications and alerts. It really depends on what they are looking for and what their specific needs are. We are usually able to customize the program to fit their needs based on the functionality that they are looking for.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned over the years about what companies want and need?*
Ms. Ludwig: Probably what we have learned over the last 16 years is that the market has not changed that much and the creative needs and challenges are still the same. How people are facing those challenges – seems to be done in a different way. Buyers are more product savvy and want much more than they did sixteen years ago when online software tools were very rare or not as prevalent for this type of industry. We're seeing that buyers these days are much more educated. They have more in depth questions about what they are looking for. While the challenges have not changed that much, the solutions for those challenges have many more options for them to choose from.

CEOCFO: *Where does mobile come in for FunctionFox?*
Ms. Ludwig: Mobile is important for this group. We are primarily focused on online platforms through their desktop, which is what the large majority of what our users will use. They are also logging on from their mobile devices, whether it is their android, iPhone or whatever they are using.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about your global reach?*
Ms. Ludwig: FunctionFox is operating across the world globally in 120 different countries. We started in North America and Canada with our largest market in the US. We also have a large customer base in the UK, Australia and New Zealand and have customers as far as Guam.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to potential customers? How do standout in the crowd if someone is looking?*
Ms. Ludwig: We have a large group of loyal customers that refer other customers and that is where we get the largest majority of our new subscribers. Word of mouth has been huge for us ever since the start and that is primarily because of the customer service that we offer and a really solid tool. If we do reach out, it is typically through trade shows and in person presentations. From time to time, we also advertise in trade publications that our users are reading. In terms of standing out from competition, there are hundreds of software programs out there. Where many of the other programs are very generic and focus on helping many different industries, we are very specific to the creative industry. If someone was looking for time tracking project management reporting for their small creative company, you will find that there is a limited number of software products available. Because we have been in the industry for over sixteen years, we have the credibility and the customer base that people trust and rely on.

CEOCFO: *Do people in the creative sector not even look because they do not think it can be there for them or because there are so few? Do you find that companies do not realize it can be possible?*
Ms. Ludwig: Absolutely. There are companies that have been utilizing a paper based system for fifteen to twenty years and they do not know that there is potentially a better way to do it. Nothing is wrong with the manual paper based system, but it is not as efficient as an online system that everyone can use together. We've contacted companies that have been using paper based systems for fifteen or twenty years and then when we show how easy it can be - they are amazed. It is really exciting to be able to help an already successful company take it to the next level for them - help them increase their billings, clients, acquisition and new business as well as do all the reporting, invoicing and billing in a much more seamless and time efficient manner.

CEOCFO: *You have several programs and pricing available. Do many people take advantage of your full range of services? Do many people start with the classic and then move up?*

Ms. Ludwig: We find that because our customer base is focused on small creative companies, we tailor the needs of what they are looking for in terms of their challenges to the solutions that that would be the most appropriate for their needs. Most people will start with our classic program that meets the needs of time tracking and limited project management. Once that is seamless for them and their company grows, we can grow with them. We can add additional project management features, resource allocation, or other features they might need. We have had people that have started with us as a freelancer and they used a very light portion of our product, to now being part of an in-house department or a company that is 50 users plus, who are now using all features of the system.

CEOCFO: *What is next for FunctionFox?*

Ms. Ludwig: What is next for FunctionFox is our continued growth. Our client referrals are still increasing. We are continuing to focus on creative companies globally and extend our reach. Our goal at FunctionFox has always been to help creative companies Stay Creative - and we will continue to do that for many years to come.