

Clarizen Helps Community of Christ Improve Work Efficiency by 30%

Founded in 1830 in the United States, *Community of Christ* is a Christian church with 250,000 members. The denominational headquarters are located in Independence, Missouri with officially-recognized churches located across 50 countries as close as Canada and as far as Zimbabwe.

Although the church has a large member-base, a modest team of employees are charged with the task of producing all the church's communication and educational resources including: videos, a monthly magazine, web articles and print publications such as worship resource materials and daily devotional books. All written materials are offered in English, French, and Spanish. As the church's Integrated Communications Team Leader, John Pinkerton was first entrusted with the challenging role of optimizing overall work processes with fewer staff. After auditing the existing project management system, Pinkerton began looking for the right solution that would help increase work efficiency while maintaining the same amount of output.

Because the team publishes a considerable amount of books and resources on an ongoing basis, it was important for Pinkerton to find a project management tool that would meet three basic criteria: help the team meet their deadlines; help each team member manage their individual workload and be in full communication with the team; and last, provide team leaders a bird's-eye view of the project's progress and the entire team's workload.

In addition to Clarizen, MS Project Enterprise, @task, and an open-source alternative were considered. Ultimately, Clarizen was selected for its easily accessible web-based interface, attractive subscription-based price modeling, and its robust project management features.

"We wanted to find a project management solution to help us nail down a deadline to the day," says Pinkerton. "The ability to schedule work accurately also meant that we are able to be more fair with the people working on each project; creating more realistic deadlines and therefore a more pleasant work environment for the whole team."

In the first few months on the Clarizen Platform, there was some natural resistance from the team to the new process and system. In an effort to counterbalance the resistance, Pinkerton used the manual features of the system to send notifications and alerts to stay on deadline. After team members become more familiar with the platform they were able to see the benefits and, actually began to rely on the software and the efficient work processes as a foundation for their work.

"In fact," says Pinkerton, "today the communication team is dealing with the opposite challenge: if a task isn't integrated into Clarizen it just doesn't get done."

Another positive outcome from using Clarizen is the ability to produce the same amount of work with 30% fewer human resources. Due to current economic situation, the team had to downsize from 15 employees to 10, but as expected the demand for deliverables has not changed. Because all the work was tracked and monitored in one shared platform on an ongoing basis, communication was open, problem areas were addressed, and deadlines were met.

Every three years Community of Christ sponsors an international delegate conference. The conference brings together the church's leaders from around the world as well as leaders from local communities to vote on new church law and legislation. As part of the conference, Pinkerton's communication team was assigned the task of producing a large notebook made up of seven booklets each having 30-100 pages. The book had to be produced in 3 languages with enough copies for 3500 English speakers, 200 French speakers and 75 Spanish speakers. To tackle the project, the team used Clarizen to track over 500 tasks to create one integrated schedule. The result? For the first time ever, the church was able to produce identical books across each language for the conference attendees, within budget and on time.

"When it came to producing 21 total booklets in three languages in three months and trying to get it all done, I don't know how anyone could have done it without Clarizen."

The entire process for creating the church's communication materials is handled in-house, from beginning to end. This includes planning, writing, copyediting and ultimately printing and managing inventory. Before using Clarizen, the work was described as tedious with fluid deadlines. Today, all projects are handled with Clarizen and production has improved in efficiency and quality. Other teams within the organization have also begun working with Clarizen.