



CASE STUDY

ENGAUGE

Marketing agency replaces multiple collaboration tools with Central Desktop for Agencies, cutting software costs by nearly 50 percent

Highlights

THE PROBLEM

Engauge, a thriving 235-person full-service marketing agency, needed to standardize processes and consolidate software licenses after three agencies merged.

THE SOLUTION

Central Desktop for Agencies replaced multiple collaboration solutions for file sharing, social networking and web conferencing. It now powers the agency's corporate intranet as well as multiple client extranets.

THE RESULTS

Engauge shaved nearly 50 percent off collaboration-related software costs and instituted a common way of working across multiple locations.

Engauge's challenge: standardizing software and business processes after three agencies merged

Engauge is a full-service marketing agency built for the digital and social age. The 235-person firm has office locations in Atlanta, GA; Columbus, OH; Orlando, FL; Pittsburgh, PA; and China. It is the social-marketing agency of record for My Coke Rewards, Chick-fil-A and other top consumer brands.

The agency formed via acquisition back in 2007. Three agencies from different disciplines and different cities came together under one umbrella: a traditional brand-communications agency, a digital agency and a direct-marketing agency. Each agency had different software and ways of doing things related to its area of specialty. Each agency used different financial systems. And various departments and teams within each agency were using a wide array of communication and collaboration tools.



“My challenge was how to break apart the best from the three agencies and rebuild them into a single agency that operated across multiple locations,” says Raj Choudhury, Engage’s managing director and executive vice president of operations. “During the first couple years, we couldn’t consolidate systems and standardize processes agencywide because we weren’t structured from a top-down perspective. We had to restructure our profit-and-loss (P&L) from division-based or managing director-based P&L to a single P&L model regardless of discipline or location.”

During the initial two years after the mergers, Engage’s IT team conducted audits across the organization and tracked all the different software licenses the agency paid for. When it came to everyday communication and collaboration, the number of tools in use was just plain overwhelming:

- SharePoint, Dropbox and FTP for sharing files
- WebEx and Fugent for web conferences
- Yammer and Ning for enterprise social networking
- Google Apps, MindMeister and Wikimedia for working together on documents
- Basecamp for client extranets

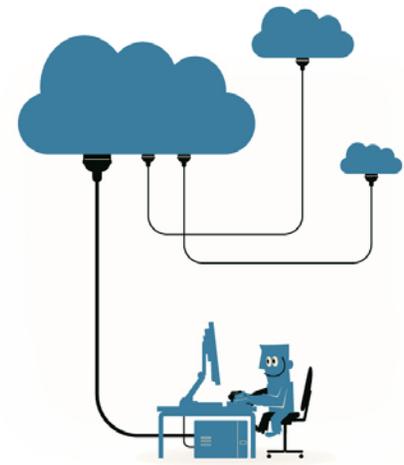
And that wasn’t even counting all the employees who were sharing files via their personal accounts at services like Box.net, Dropbox and YouSendIt.

“With that amount of data replication, it’s hard to know where to find things and which version is correct. And that makes it hard to produce the best product for clients across disciplines,” says Choudhury. “My goal was to make Engage an easier place to work.”

Less equals more: Central Desktop for Agencies replaces multiple point solutions

On the collaboration front, Engage decided to build something new from the ground up instead of trying to reengineer all of its existing systems. The agency’s starting point would be a new intranet that would also consolidate file sharing, web conferencing, social networking and other functionality.

By chance, Choudhury saw another agency using Central Desktop for Agencies. “They used Central Desktop for a client extranet, very similar to what we were doing with Basecamp,” he says.



“My goal was to make Engage an easier place to work.”

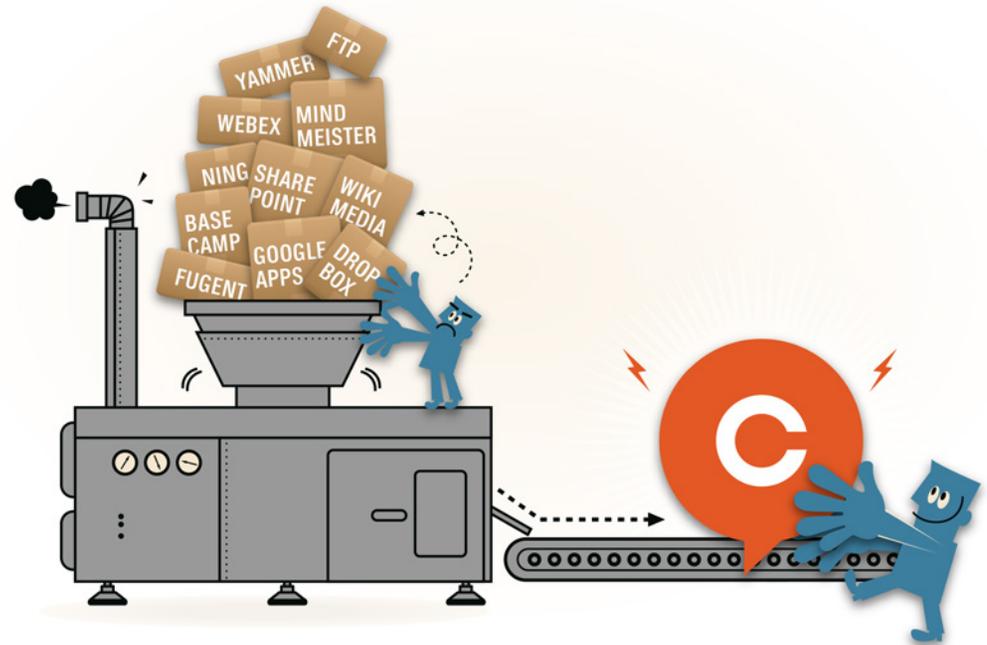
Raj Choudhury, Engage



At first, Choudhury only considered Central Desktop as a possible client-extranet replacement. But he changed his mind when he realized that the solution also encompasses file sharing, web conferencing and private social networking. Ultimately, he decided to make Central Desktop the platform of choice for the new corporate intranet.

“We were able to replace more than 10 different collaboration tools with Central Desktop. In software licenses alone, we’re spending roughly 45 to 50 percent less than we were before. Of that, 25 percent was a complete waste of legacy licensing cost because no one was even using the software,” says Choudhury.

As impressive as the dollars-and-cents savings are, Choudhury values the reduction of effort even more: “I gain so much from managing a single tool versus multiple tools. It means less effort for IT, operations and finance. It also simplifies the process of onboarding and training employees because we only have to teach them one solution instead of many point solutions.”



Replacing numerous collaboration tools with Central Desktop reduced Engauge's software licensing costs by nearly 50 percent.



Engage's intranet, The Hub, connects employees across all locations

Engage's Central Desktop-based intranet, affectionately known as "The Hub," launched March 2012. The Hub has become the online glue that holds agency employees together across all locations and job functions.

It's where new hires and longtime employees alike can learn who does what and who's assigned to which client team. It's the source of employee news, such as new hires and promotions. It's where employees can fill out HR forms and access all the tools they need to do their jobs.

"Our biggest success was that we exposed tools that I would expect any agency to have – tools that our agency deserved – to all resources," says Choudhury. "Previously certain tools were only available to certain teams in certain locations, so there was a lot of 'Wow, I can do that?' when we introduced Central Desktop."

The Hub brings Engage employees together to share files, interact with each other, submit HR requests and more.



The Hub's core functionality includes:

- **File sharing** via a dedicated workspace that all employees can access. Employees no longer have to log in to multiple systems to share large files with other offices, clients or vendors.
- **Threaded discussions** that add familiar social networking features to the corporate intranet.
- **Intuitive content creation.** Choudhury says, "Specific teams take ownership of different content areas. Some groups take a lot of content and distill it down into daily tidbits that everyone can talk about."
- **Phone and web conferencing** that allows all employees to jump on web meetings, share their screens and collaborate. "Previously, only account and marketing folks had access to these types of tools. Now your average designer does, too," says Choudhury.
- **Workflow automation** that speeds up processes like office supply requests. Employees fill out an online request form, then the request is automatically routed to the appropriate office manager at each location.
- **Embedded third-party applications**, such as the IT help desk. "We use iframes to make point solutions feel like they're part of The Hub. End users feel like everything's in one place, and they're only using one solution," says Choudhury.
- **User security based** on Microsoft Active Directory. The AD single sign-on controls each user's team memberships, workspace access and role-based permissions, such as the ability to view management-level audit logs or invite nonagency employees into the system.

1. File sharing turned out to be our most popular feature. The user-adoption rate is really, really high.
2. The ability to easily build databases and create specific views based on customized attributes means our development resources no longer have to spend time writing custom apps. HR can now automate processes like office supply requests without IT involvement.
3. Embedding multiple RSS and blog feeds in our client extranets makes it possible for everyone to learn about our clients and their industries quickly.

Here are my
three favorite
things about
Central Desktop.



Raj Choudhury
Managing director and
executive vice president of operations
Engage



Client extranets help Engauge educate and serve its clients

Just as Engauge uses The Hub to hold its staff together, it also uses private extranets to build closer relationships with clients. Each client workspace centralizes Statements of Work, creative deliverables, ongoing discussions and client-specific assets.

“Each client workspace contains content feeds, such as latest trends in grocery and newest social-media findings,” says Choudhury. “We want our clients to be as educated as we are.”

Engauge got to this point by extensively beta-testing its extranets. Engauge started by recruiting champions from client teams that had previously used systems like Basecamp or Jira to manage client communication. The beta teams defined exactly what functionality they needed. After the internal teams were happy, Engauge rolled the extranets out to a handful of clients. When they were happy, the agency began launching extranets for all net-new clients. The last step was gradually introducing the new workspaces to legacy clients.

So what do Engauge's clients think?

“We are the digital agency of record for one of the world's largest grocery retailers. They like our Central Desktop client extranet so much, they actually use it to house their overall marketing calendar – not just for the subset of things we're working on, but for everything,” says Choudhury.



Insider secrets: file sharing

Here's how Engauge implemented file sharing, the agency's most widely used Central Desktop feature.

ORIGINAL INTENT WAS TO PUT SECURITY CONTROLS IN PLACE

Choudhury recalls, “Everyone had personal accounts at file sharing services like Dropbox and Box.net. When we first implemented file sharing, we did it primarily to make sure we had controls in place to protect sensitive agency data. We let it be known that we wouldn't pay expense reports if employees opened file sharing accounts on their own.”

ENGAUGE CREATED A WORKSPACE SPECIFICALLY DEVOTED TO FILE SHARING

Although Central Desktop allows users to share files from any workspace, Engauge created a prominent, dedicated area for this purpose. “Since employees were already familiar with YouSendIt and Dropbox, we customized a workspace to mimic the look-and-feel of these types of services.

FILE SHARING QUICKLY BECAME THE MOST WIDELY USED FEATURE

“We had no idea of the level of document sharing that would occur because of Central Desktop. We were actually quite surprised,” Choudhury admits. “Everyone uses it – even creatives. The adoption rate is really, really high because people can see how easy it is. They don't have to pay, and they don't have to open yet another account.”

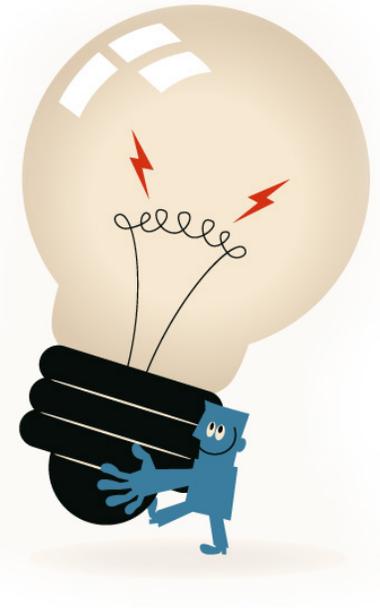


About Central Desktop

Central Desktop helps people work together in ways never before possible.

The Central Desktop collaboration platform connects people and information in the cloud, making it possible to share files, combine knowledge, inspire ideas, manage projects and more. Central Desktop serves half a million users worldwide.

Key Central Desktop customers include CBS, MLB.com, PGA Tour, the Humane Society of the United States, CareerBuilder, Javelin Marketing Group, Moxie, WD-40, Workday and more. Founded in 2005, Central Desktop is a PGi company located in Pasadena, California.



*Click here to learn more
about Central Desktop
for Agencies.
(c'mon just click it!)*



Contact us
We don't bite

866 900 7646
centraldesktop.com