

Dickinson Group Case Study Copy

Omnios Helps Dickinson Group Integrate Business Systems to Capture Revenue

Dickinson Group (Dickinson) is a marketing communications firm specializing in commercial and multi-family real estate. Based in Chicago, Illinois, the boutique firm represents some of the most prestigious properties in the Chicago area, including the John Hancock Center. Founded in 1992, Dickinson employs a highly specialized team of marketing and public relations professionals.

Customer Profile

Dickinson Group is a boutique marketing communications firm specializing in commercial and multi-family real estate.

Situation

Dickinson was using disparate systems for its financial and project accounting. The company needed to reduce the complexity of its processes in order to increase productivity and reduce time spent on non-revenue producing tasks.

Solution

Omnios partnered with Dickinson to re-design their business processes and implement a financial and project accounting solution. The solution provided detailed insight into projects and improved the speed of their billing cycle while integrating tightly with other business applications.

Results

- Reduced hours spent on billing from 40 hours to 25 hours per month
- Increased employee productivity due to the improved efficiency of the billing process
- Shortened the billing cycle and Dickinson's "work-to-cash" window
- Streamlined inefficient processes caused by multiple systems
- Enhanced reporting and business analysis capabilities



With the help of Omnios, we now have a solid grasp of where the business stands at any given time. Our accounts payable, accounts receivable and billing systems are all connected, which gives us a sense of security.



**— Business Manager,
Dickinson Group**



Business Situation

For years, Dickinson struggled with a cumbersome and time-consuming billing process because they were using multiple software programs and manual processes to produce monthly client bills. This inefficient process required employees to duplicate data entry and spend valuable, billable time on administrative tasks rather than revenue-producing assignments.

The Dickinson Management team understood that the company's productivity and efficiency would increase by eliminating multiple data entry points and redundant work efforts. Additionally, they needed the ability to provide more detailed, client-based reporting that current processes and systems couldn't deliver. In conjunction, management was seeking new processes and technology that could streamline their operational approach into one, easy-to-use, efficient solution that offered enhanced management reporting, business analytics and planning capabilities.

Business Solution

Before meeting with Omnios, Dickinson was considering the development of a custom billing and project accounting system to meet the needs of their business. However, after an initial consultation and discussing several options, Omnios was able to provide process and technology recommendations that would help achieve their goals without the expense and risk associated with building a custom application. Based on Omnios' recommendations, Dickinson selected Microsoft Dynamics for its capabilities and ease-of-use.

To consolidate its multiple systems, improve client billing and enhance project reporting, Omnios was hired to re-design their business processes. This included the deployment of Microsoft Dynamics, including many of its advanced features:

- *Financial Applications* for preparing and tracking typical accounting and financial information; encompassing client invoicing, accounts payable and general ledger to reduce the billing cycle; and providing enhanced management reporting capabilities.
- *Project Controller* for detailed analytics providing project managers with accurate, meaningful information to monitor project revenue, expenses and profitability.
- *Employee Utilization* for tracking resource availability, billable time, and revenues; and establishing utilization goals to improve productivity.



Business Results

Dickinson worked with Omnios to re-design its business processes and implement a financial and project accounting solution. The solution provided detailed insight into projects, improved the speed of their billing cycle, and integrated tightly with Dickinson's other business applications.

"Improved processes and technology have enhanced our office productivity," said Dickinson Group's Business Manager. "We now have a solid grasp of where the business stands at any given time. Accounts payable, accounts receivable and billing systems are all connected, which gives the company a sense of security."

Streamlined Multiple Systems

Rather than using multiple systems for time tracking and billing purposes, Omnios enabled Dickinson to track, manipulate, and analyze employee time to produce monthly invoices directly from their new business management system as opposed to importing and exporting data between Word and Excel.

Dickinson provides media monitoring in order to track client media coverage. Previously, these clips were manually stored and tracked on Excel spreadsheets. With Omnios' help, Dickinson's staff now utilizes one central repository to store media clips within the project management application, creating a running tally of all media clips. As a result, the process of storing, organizing and accessing these media clips has become more efficient.

Increased Efficiency and Reporting Capabilities

Omnios' process and technology recommendations allowed Dickinson's custom reports to be broken down into two groups: 1) Management reports for business operations, and 2) Operational reports through a business portal for project tracking and analysis. Omnios also developed several analytical management reports including:

- Cross-functional fee comparisons
- Revenue breakdowns by billing type
- Employee internal cost and revenue comparisons
- Billing based on specific fees broken out annually and monthly

Based on business metrics and utilization goals, Omnios enabled managers to use the Employee Utilization tool to ensure that employee time and availability was efficiently distributed by client and project.



Improved Customer Billing

Dickinson provides clients with activity reports to accompany every client invoice. However, with its previous systems, there was no streamlined method for employees to be able to include project activities with their timesheets. Project managers oftentimes had to collect this information at the end of a month, which was extremely time-consuming and provided too large of an opportunity for human error.

To eliminate this inefficiency, Omnios implemented a process with the related software tools that allowed employees to enter activities when the billable tasks were actually performed. This ensured that the appropriate information was collected and ultimately provided the relevant detail for clients to reference. By effectively integrating this process with the suitable software solution, Omnios allowed project managers to spend less time on data entry and provided them with the ability to quickly monitor hours billed with work descriptions. As a result, the billing process has been reduced to 25 hours from 40 hours per month.

About Omnios

Omnios is a leading provider of consulting services for organizations with a focus on business process improvement, financial and project management policies and procedures, and supporting software tools. We work primarily with professional service and project centric businesses that want to improve their profitability and productivity by better managing specific projects, jobs, cost centers and initiatives. We specialize in planning, designing and building streamlined and effective business systems, which allow organizations to focus on their strategic objectives and running a successful business.

