

HORNE Creative Group’s 360° Project Management System is a marketing and communications solution that supports all phases of the project management cycle. The 360° Project Management System is comprised of two components, our Web-based project management software and our standardized processes and procedures, which work in tandem to support every task of every project. We developed the 360° Project Management System because we take project management seriously and are committed to providing our clients with the highest quality work on time and on budget.



Web-based Project Management Software

As a project is entered into the system, detailed estimates, budgets, schedules, project specifications, timesheets, team member information and a project diary to house client/staff communications are uploaded into project folders. Additionally, folders are set up for first, second and third draft creative briefs; first, second and third draft copy; and first, second and third draft design files all with a version-control feature that time and date stamps each document. Our three-tiered draft system allows our clients to thoroughly review each draft to ensure that both the client and HORNE staff are clear on the project details and expectations.

Client contact information is also set up in the system. This information not only includes a name, address, phone number and email address, but also a list of any planned absences of key personnel during the project as well as contact information of backup personnel authorized to work on the project. This mitigates scheduling risks by ensuring that a representative is always available to review documents and make decisions. Another feature that streamlines the project management process is the open-access feature associated with our Web-based software. This feature enables clients to view all project schedules and comment on and approve deliverables, which help keep projects on schedule.

Standardized Processes and Procedures

Our standardized and tested processes allow us to monitor not only the quality of the deliverable, but also the procedure that is followed in order to complete a deliverable. Our account management, writing, editing, production, estimating and billing procedures all have checklists, reviews and sign-off requirements. Our comprehensive procedures manual outlines each step of our processes and is available for review.

HORNE conducts a weekly project status meeting with all employees and subcontractors. At these meetings, the Executive Team reviews the status reports, clarifies (if required) any of the notes on the project, reviews the budget and schedule status and conducts problem solving with the project director and/or subcontractor if needed. Employees and subcontractors have regular deadlines for submission of timesheets and invoices to ensure that our budget tracking is on target.

If at any time during the project, we encounter misunderstandings, unclear expectations or unresponsiveness from the client, we schedule a meeting with the account team and the client to discuss the situation and develop a mutually agreed-upon plan to move forward. The plan is closely monitored by the account team with the goal of keeping the project on course at all times.

We implement cross-functional staffing so that, in case of an unplanned absence, another employee can step in and capably perform the duties of another. Additionally, we have a pool of select contractors who are also able to assume the duties of another at a moment's notice. Since all client files are housed on our project management system, important information is accessed quickly and easily.

As with many projects, changed deadlines, changed priorities and a change in the direction of the project are unavoidable. In order to resolve issues, we first analyze the problem and then develop an action plan for how to correct it. The action plan includes which employees to contact, detailed steps for how to correct the problem and a project debrief with a list of recommendations on how to avoid a similar situation.

Managing and reducing risks for our clients is of primary importance to HORNE. Though our Web-based project management software allows us to work in tandem with our processes and procedures, which greatly reduces the risk for project mishaps, we have taken it one step further and have implemented a formal risk management plan. This plan helps us identify, evaluate and respond to risks associated specifically with marketing communications projects. Our comprehensive risk management plan includes explanations of 1) risk identification; 2) quantitative risk analysis; 3) qualitative risk analysis; 4) risk response planning; and 5) risk monitoring and control.

