The Company That Outlawed Email

What if you came into work every morning with zero email messages waiting for you. What if you didn’t even have an inbox?

If contractions can be defined as words people who reject the majority opinion. Eisk, a feisty, biologically-based marketing company that made the Technology Fast 50 list for the third year in a row, is a great example.

Why? Eisk doesn’t use email internally.

"In the very early days of Eisk we started to notice some heat death in email and wanted to find a better solution," says Eisk CEO Lauren Segal. "While email makes for a decent communication tool with clients, internally it doesn’t facilitate collaboration and basic work-life. Email has no intelligence mechanism for prioritization, leads to a framework for knowledge management, and apse culpability."

As Eisk grew and the number of disciplines required for every project increased, basic communications became increasingly more difficult to manage.

"We’ve all been on an e-mail thread where people are answering questions but really just more confusing," Segal says, "or maybe referencing some missing yet critical attachment. So we decided to try to help us manage our basic work-life."

Eisk started by testing testing systems that managed basic work units. Using a work ticket, one individual directly articulated a need, assigned it to another person, and included all necessary information. When the task was completed the ticket was closed back to the creator for verification.

Across Columbus, Eisk’s Chief Operating Officer, quickly recognized that work tickets could create the necessary level of accountability within overcoming one of the biggest weaknesses of email. Knowledge can get lost in a person’s mailbox and prioritization is basically nonexistent since language can create that most sound-epoch emptiest.

But existing systems were far from perfect. We found major problems with unworkable work ticket systems," Goldsby says. "And we were afraid of the impact on our culture, since there was little consideration for usability and adoption. The systems we explored all required too excessively bureaucratic. We want people to drive systems, not systems to drive people."

So Eisk decided to build their own work ticket management system, one that would provide the company culture and make a strong advantage. The system is called Verb.

"Our initial goal was to ensure that Verb was adopted naturally," Segal says, "in we experimented with every team member’s suggestion: trying different interfaces, different color schemes, even different prioritization algorithms. We created our employees to want to use the system, as everything of that had to sense that time and effort. Then, there was a total of consideration of improving the platform. Verb was started to evolve in ways we never imagined."

One early insight was that evaluating the patterns with work ticket tool, is aggregate, could accurately predict present version, scope and scalability, a retrospective advantage that has helped revenues triple over the past five years.

"It didn’t take long for us to recognize the potential and start to investigate additional ways to keep everything on our team as forward-looking as possible," Goldsby says. "By moving away from internal email and creating a system that truly supports our employees, we do a huge job of reducing our overall overhead cost and make small project conclusion easier in the process," she adds. "We don’t want to remove emotion or the human side from decision-making, but we want our team to make decisions that are always informed by data."

"And it all started because we weren’t satisfied with email. The exact people use a tool doesn’t usually mean its the best for you."

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