

CASE STUDY III: SCALE EVERYTHING

The enduring challenges:

Efficiency: during every downturn, the organization spins up a new cost-cutting drive. We are always doing more with less.

Modality: corporate service provisions ebb and flow (eg between centralized \longleftrightarrow regionalized; in-house \longleftrightarrow outsourced) based on C-suite mood.

The point of view:

- Let's get ahead of top-down edicts to cut cost. Let's act as if...we were the CEO.
- Let's scale processes and engage stakeholders so that everyone is a communicator.
- Let's put ourselves out of a job (and seek to create a new one by moving up the value chain.)

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The sell-ution

We began with a 7-figure budget and a team of 15 people. Then the financial crash hit, and the “cost challenge” programs began. We decided to attack the bloat and be an exemplar of creative, cost-effective services, such that we would never again be told how to organize. Instead, we would show the company how to do it. Over a 2-3 year period we trimmed the team to 5 and the budget under 6-figures - all while expanding our service offering.

The critical idea was to embrace cost reduction as a creative challenge. As creative leaders, we should be able to determine more effective approaches. Every project and process was reviewed and reformulated around velocity, beta-testing, emergence, technology leverage, and low-cost mass production.

“Quality” content was redefined around these drivers, where before it was about high-end production values. We would lean-in to the cost driver, and tell/sell a different value proposition to the organization about what good looks like. We are leaders not followers.

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The mobilization

As detailed previously <see case study: TRUST / FLOW>, we leveraged our ESN to enable every colleague to share their stories. Interesting content emerged from unexpected places. By redeveloping the website around a blog function, we were able to effortlessly share 100s of stories without coding / site redesign. Content creation and brand ambassadorship became baked into the employee experience.

With less writing and project management responsibilities, the Communications function moved along the value chain, picking up new skills and turned to audio-visual storytelling, bringing the last of the agency work in-house <see case study: AGENCY> and building its own “Studio” (in a storage cupboard). We created 100s of videos a year; plus podcasts, photos, publications - at “zero” cost. Thereafter, the department was always noted as the most effective at reimagining its service offering under constraint.

Ultimately, in 2019, I was able to propose to the organization that my role was no longer required because our systems of content creation and production were self-sustaining.

WHAT WORKS...

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