Leading Life Science Company Gains Visibility and Consistency, Enabling Growth With Wrike and Microsoft Teams

For more than a decade, this industry innovator has been consulting for the drug development industry. Founded as a partnership between leading clinical experts who saw the opportunity in an unmet industry need, the company has grown to boast a large team with expertise in a wide range of therapeutic areas. They help drug developers design their programs, make informed decisions, and strengthen their overall development programs.

The Challenge

Scaling and growth — more projects lead to more complexity

Drug development is a complex process — from ensuring data management practices meet regulatory standards to producing quality scientific writing. Following regulatory procedures and filing applications requires deep scientific involvement and data inter-pretation, and the company is there to help every step of the way.

With their business growing exponentially over the last decade, coordinating projects across multiple divisions and managing internal resources was becoming a challenge. Teams used email and Skype for Business to communicate with each other, and each week they held department-wide meetings to go over all active projects and make sure each division had the data, quality control, and reports they needed. While this all-hands meeting was vital to keeping projects on track, it was costing them dozens of hours of precious work time each week. Besides these weekly meetings, the company didn't have a tool to keep track of all the moving parts or standardized timelines for projects, which can take anywhere from two weeks to six months to complete.

The company needed a better way to manage projects, coordinate across divisions, and plan ahead. They needed a versatile and flexible solution to give them insight into what

SUCCESS STORY FACTS

40+

hours/week saved for the company

100s

of active clients, many with multiple projects

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With a single dashboard, they're able to manage their increased workload and resourcing needs with ease

both individuals and divisions were working on across the entire organization. And they needed to standardize time frames so they could not only manage their internal resources better, but hold clients accountable and keep projects on track and on time — especially as the business, and the workload, continued to grow. There's no flexibility in dealing with regulatory agency deadlines, so it's vital for project managers to know exactly where in the process each project is at any given time. That's when they found Wrike.

The Solution

The ultimate hub for teamwork: Teams + Wrike

The company chose Wrike for project management because it gives them high-level visibility across all their active projects with the added ability to view projects and timelines from different perspectives — including project, division, and individual workers. This makes it possible to see when particularly busy weeks are coming up and ensure departments get the resources they need. A scientist at the company says, "That visibility from different perspectives is incredibly valuable. Now we can see what's coming and plan ahead." With an individual dashboard for each project, they're better able to keep track of details, meet deadlines, and increase overall efficiency.

Visibility drives accountability

The company uses Wrike's Gantt Chart and Calendar features to maintain schedules and keep projects on track. Project managers maintain the timeline, with projects listed out by client name and each task assigned to a team member. Each division has its own Wrike calendar and an "unassigned" tracker to pick up and fill billable time, maximizing productivity. Project teams track everything from simple, ad hoc client requests to multi-month projects that span departments and divisions. And at their weekly division meetings, they use Wrike calendars to schedule projects and optimize team utilization. This gives them time in the division meetings to address wider issues, processes, and scientific discussions, rather than spending it all on individual project status updates.

Visibility across projects is especially valuable for the quality assurance (QA) group. Knowing what's coming their way is vital for ensuring project timelines are met and, often, that regulatory submissions are made on time. The scientist explains, "The QA group is a separate team and until we started using Wrike, they weren't integrated with project teams at all. The director was really excited when we were able to provide visibility into upcoming projects."

When the company started using Wrike, they sat down and figured out standard time-lines so they could be more consistent in how they were delivering to clients. It also helped them make some crucial process decisions. The scientist explains, "Around the same time we started using Wrike, we were dealing with some big regulatory changes to do with dataset formats. Wrike was very useful in helping us figure out how we had to adapt our processes to meet those new requirements."

The company starts each new project with a customized blueprint, which also helps project managers make sure clients understand workflow upfront. The scientist says, "Now we can have a proactive conversation at the beginning of a project and say we're committing to this timeline now, but only if you're able to get us what we need on time. If your data are late, it's going to get held up in QA." It's a more efficient approach than chasing them down after the fact or having no warning that a timeline may be impacted.

Closing the loop on communication

With the company growing to multiple offices and many consultants working remotely, they also needed a better way to manage internal communications. They adopted Microsoft Teams in early 2019. With Teams, they can create separate sub-channels for individual projects to keep everyone involved on the same page, which is a lot easier than trying to keep track of complex requirements via email.

A project manager at the company explains, "Microsoft Teams is very powerful, and we put a lot of thought into how to best use it and what integrations would work for our needs." They were excited to discover the Wrike and Microsoft Teams integration, which allowed them to bring the Gantt chart and task tracking into the Teams communication channels.

The scientist adds, "Using Wrike and Teams has really given our team a cohesive experience. Even though the scientific staff had access to the project timelines before the integration, most of them relied on the project manager to update them every step of the way. Now, they can see the timeline for each project in a calendar view within the Teams channel. So, it's streamlined things significantly."

The company creates a new Teams channel for each new client. Each new project is added as a client sub-channel, with a Wrike tab at the top linking the project and Gantt chart. This ensures consistency across projects and makes it easy for employees to come on and off of projects as needed, and always find what they're looking for. Plus, team members don't have to ask the project manager where to find anything like they did

"Using Wrike and Teams has really given our team a cohesive experience. Now the scientific staff can see the timeline for each project in a calendar view within the Teams channel, without going into Wrike. So, it's streamlined things significantly."

Scientist

"Wrike and Teams have saved so many things from falling through the cracks. Without it, we'd still be trying to keep track of everything manually and that could have really impacted our relationships with several clients."

Project Manager

when they were using Skype. Their assignments and timelines show up in Teams auto-matically, via the Wrike integration.

Power to grow

With the Wrike and Teams integration giving them the ability to manage projects, tasks, and communication all in the same place, the company has been able to scale. "It's so nice to have everything in one place and easily usable," says the scientist. "That definitely enabled us to grow and manage the increased workload and resourcing needs." Today the company has hundreds of active clients at any given time, many of whom have multiple projects in development.

They still hold weekly meetings, but with resource planning handled, divisions can use that time to focus on valuable issues like scientific processes and internal infrastructure. "That's been really valuable for us to spend less time focusing on resourcing and more time on other important parts of the business," says the scientist.

The Conclusion

Wrike's flexibility and agility has helped the company scale seamlessly while also increasing efficiency and productivity. The Microsoft Teams integration further simplifies resourcing and communication across projects, divisions, and departments, and gives every team member an easy way to stay on top of their tasks. Now they have the visibility they need from any perspective, so they can plan accordingly and keep each project moving forward. The project manager says, "Wrike and Teams have saved so many things from falling through the cracks. Without it, we'd still be trying to keep track of everything manually and that could have really impacted our relationships with several clients."

Find out how Wrike can help your business

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