SUCCESS STORY

Scale My Empire Triples Project Margins with Mavenlink

THE SCALE MY EMPIRE STORY

Experts on Scaling Businesses Seeked Their Own Digital Transformation

Scale My Empire (SME) was founded on the idea that the key to small business success is the implementation of the right systems. In order to help their clients through this digital transformation, the team developed a proprietary framework, the Revolution Method, that is specifically designed to help small to medium sized organizations systemize their operations in order to create a scalable, profitable business.

Officially launched in 2017, founder Scott Gellatly knew from inception that they would need to build their business around the ideal technology stack. “I have witnessed a pattern occurring again and again—without proper systems in place, it’s hard to get past the first few million in revenue. You will end up doing twice the amount of work, only to find that you have to scale back down. You have to make your systems work for you when you want to scale.”

With this in mind, the team began an extensive search for the ideal systems stack for their services business.

INDUSTRY
IT Services

COMPANY
Scale My Empire

WHAT MAVENLINK REPLACED
Point solutions and homegrown tools and processes

BENEFITS
• Improved project margins by 3X
• Increased projects delivered on-budget from 20% to 90%
• Improved decision making and operational execution
“None of the solutions I tried before Mavenlink, provided the financial controls I was looking for.”

— SCOTT GELLATLY, FOUNDER, SCALE MY EMPIRE

THE CHALLENGE

Scaling Beyond the Illusion of Success

From the beginning SME experienced success, with significant revenue growth and a host of new clients. However, founder Scott Gellatly knew that the real metric necessary for scale was great margins. Before Mavenlink they lacked a platform to underpin the business, which was causing operational challenges and leading to avoidable, margin-cutting mistakes.

Lack of visibility into profitability. The team didn’t have an easy or efficient way to access data to give them insight into which projects were making—and costing—them money.

“We were good at scoping projects in a way that made us money. Then micro-changes would occur during the project that don’t necessarily constitute a change request. These were adding up, and most of the time we didn’t realize the problem until it was too late. I would spend 4 hours to try and figure out profits on a completed project, only to find our profitability had been smashed.”

Hiring mistakes. Without a great way to forecast resource needs based on demand, the team was forced to use gut instincts around hiring. This led to times when people were brought on too early or too late, or people with the wrong skills were added. People at times were under or overworked, which was also hard on team morale.

“Hiring mistakes for a small services firm can be devastating. Our people are our highest cost. Mistakes in hiring are the equivalent of buying too much stock in a product-based business. We had to get this right.”

FROM THE SOURCE

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The Switch To Mavenlink

A Platform To Support Scale

The search for Mavenlink came with a strategic change in SME’s business strategy. They shifted from a firm that provided commoditized services, to business consultants. Once that decision was made, they were ready to focus on scaling the business and began the search for the platform to help.

The team looked at several different tools, from lightweight project management solutions such as Asana and Wrike, to work management tools like Clarizen. “None of the solutions I tried before Mavenlink, provided the financial controls I was looking for.” I was disappointed that even the more powerful solutions just don’t do reporting well.

With Mavenlink, Scott could immediately see how the platform was going to help him open the black box of his business. It had all the project control features that he wanted: he could forecast resources, easily view budgets versus actuals, and rate cards. However, it was Mavenlink’s robust reporting capabilities that really blew him away.

“Frankly, the first thing I noticed about Mavenlink was that it’s beautiful. Which is important because I knew adoption would be effortless. At heart I am a numbers guy, and when I saw Insights my heart exploded.”

An expert at recommending technology solutions to help small businesses scale, Scott knew Mavenlink was the right tool for his own business.
THE RESULTS

Improved Financial Performance

Improved project margins by 3X’s
Scott’s primary objective was to increase margins. All the other metrics he uses to measure success of Mavenlink, for example the significant improvements to utilization that Mavenlink has helped to drive, matter as a measure to increase the margins. With Mavenlink, the company has more than tripled profit margins. “With Mavenlink we can make more money, doing less work. That is how you scale.”

Increased projects delivered on-budget from 20% to 90%
Mavenlink has also made the company more predictable. The percent of projects that are delivered on-budget has improved from 20% to 90%. This helps with forecasting, and has provided a better sense of the true cost of delivery.

Improved decision making and operational execution
With Mavenlink, Scott said he has improved hiring decisions, pricing decisions, and billing terms. He also stated it has improved the way the team works and communicates, and keeps people across what’s happening. Finally, it has helped how they have standardized and systemized how they deliver projects