

## SUCCESS STORY

# Primitive Spark Improves Utilization and Profit Margins More Than 100% with Mavenlink



+ PRIMITIVE SPARK

### THE PRIMITIVE SPARK STORY

#### Elegant Web Interactions

Primitive Spark is an award-winning digital marketing agency with offices in Los Angeles and Denver. Specializing in user-centered digital product design, with a primary focus on complex applications, the team at Primitive Spark is passionate about cutting through big data to create simple interfaces.

Primitive Spark takes an anthropological approach to discover what people and businesses need from each other. The team thoughtfully engages real people in real world environments. Primitive Spark is dedicated to realizing creative and technical possibilities that spark truly inspiring interactive experiences. They are one of the few digital marketing agencies focused on designing elegantly simple interfaces for complex applications, and have emerged as the leader in the industry.

### INDUSTRY

Agency | Digital Marketing

### COMPANY

Primitive Spark

### SIZE

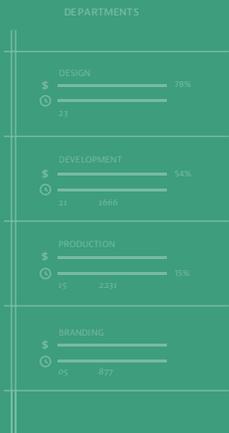
10-100 Employees

### WHAT MAVENLINK REPLACED

Google Sheets, Basecamp, Smartsheet, Trello

### BENEFITS

- 136% Increase in Profit Margin
- 116% Increase in Billable Utilization
- Simplified Systems Footprint from 4 to 1
- Newfound Visibility into Real-Time Business Performance



## FAVORITE MAVENLINK FEATURE

# Estimates vs. Actual

"Executives at Primitive Spark check the Estimates vs. Actuals report on a weekly basis. Each week I will schedule my team for certain projects, and I compare their actuals to what we scheduled — if there is a negative variance, it will start eating into my budgets and I need to do something about it. The ability to respond to project conflict on the fly allows me to make adjustments before it affects my margins."

— Brooke Coe, Project Director, Primitive Spark

### THE CHALLENGE

## Growing Company, Inadequate Systems

Two years ago, Primitive Spark began to pivot towards focusing on web app development specifically for B2B organizations. The company experienced substantial growth during this time of transition, as more resources were required to keep up with demand. Today, Primitive Spark has nearly doubled in size. To efficiently manage incoming demand, almost half of their team consists of freelancers, UX professionals, and independent web developers.

According to Brooke, with growth came operational complications. "We were using a variety of disparate systems including Google Sheets for estimating and burn reports, Basecamp for time tracking, Smartsheet for scheduling, email for workflow approvals, Trello for requirements, and a lot of exporting/importing. But it was kind of patchwork, time consuming, and fraught with potential for human error as we exported from one system to another."

Primitive Spark had no way of seeing all of the moving parts that occurred during a project's lifespan. It was nearly impossible to understand the financial impact that their decisions were having on margins. From Brooke, "In the past, we would hope and pray we would hit our project margins. We had no real insight until the project was complete, and it was based on the data we had access to in the Google Sheets."

### FROM THE SOURCE

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— Brooke Coe, Project Director, Primitive Spark

“ We actually piloted Accelo but then dropped it due to many actions being multi-step versus one click, and the UI wasn’t as good as we hoped. We also looked at: 10,000ft, Asana, Blossom, Clarizen, Dapulse, LiquidPlanner, Rally, Smartsheet, Teamwork, Timelog, VersionOne, Workfront, Workzone, and Wrike. Mavenlink was clearly the best. ”

— BROOKE COE, PROJECT DIRECTOR, PRIMITIVE SPARK

## THE SWITCH TO MAVENLINK

### The Need for One Comprehensive System

Primitive Spark hit a tipping point where their growth outpaced their operational efficiencies. According to Brooke, the requirements for the team were “as simple as they were complex.” “We needed a comprehensive system where we could track time, manage resources and timelines, and gain project insight all in a single location — without exporting and importing into other systems.” The end goal of migrating to a core operating platform was to get better data to aid in key decision making. There were several areas where they needed more insight, including:

- What resources were available to work, and when.
- How burn rates were affecting project margins.
- How resources were tracking towards utilization targets.

### Intuitive User Interface

Primitive Spark also needed a solution with industry-leading UX/UI explains Brooke, “That’s what we do as a company.” According to Brooke, “We actually piloted Accelo but then dropped it due to many actions being multistep versus one click, and the UI wasn’t as good as we hoped. We also looked at: 10,000ft, Asana, Blossom, Clarizen, Dapulse, LiquidPlanner, Rally, Smartsheet, Teamwork, Timelog, VersionOne, Workfront, Workzone, and Wrike. Mavenlink was clearly the best.”

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## The Results

### 116% Increase in Billable Utilization in the Last 6 Months

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### 136% Increase in Profit Margin in the Last 6 Months

According to Brooke, “We can evaluate quickly if we can handle a new project coming aboard with current resources or if we need to hire freelancers. We have witnessed a significant increase in profit margin since we started using Mavenlink.”

### Simplified Systems Footprint from 4 to 1

“We were using a variety of disparate systems including Google Sheets for estimating and burn reports, Basecamp for time tracking, Smartsheet for scheduling, email for workflow approvals, Trello for requirements, and a lot of exporting/importing. But it was kind of patchwork, time consuming, and fraught with potential for human error as we exported from one system to another.” Mavenlink replaced all four systems.

### Newfound Visibility into Real-Time Business Performance

“In the past, we would hope and pray we would hit our project margins. We had no real insight until the project was complete.” Mavenlink provided real-time visibility.

