

BD Fox & Friends Inc. Advertising

Advertising firm saves tens of thousands of dollars and speeds review cycles by up to 50% using online collaboration system based on Adobe Acrobat

PROFILE

- Advertising firm serving the entertainment industry
- Employees: 85
- Headquarters: Los Angeles, California
- www.bdfox.com

BENEFITS SUMMARY

- With its unique electronic commenting features and WebDAV support, Acrobat dramatically streamlines ad review and approval.
- Acrobat and the COLLAB system accelerate the review cycle by as much as 50%.
- Acrobat and the COLLAB system reduce BD Fox's administrative costs by tens of thousands of dollars annually.
- Acrobat support for WebDAV eases version control issues and keeps all reviewers in sync.
- Clients and BD Fox staff stay more organized because they can search for and review documents in an Adobe PDF-based archive.
- Adobe PDF files preserve ads perfectly for online review or delivery to publications.
- Electronic commenting features in Acrobat allow reviewers to make detailed comments and even draw on top of images to avoid confusion.

Creative talent abounds among advertising agencies serving the entertainment industry. Many Hollywood firms are known for their excellent creative work, and among them is BD Fox & Friends, an agency with clients such as Warner Bros., CBS, and Microsoft. To distinguish itself from the competition, BD Fox developed COLLAB, a Web-based collaboration system that makes the ad review process easy, fast, and convenient for clients. Based on Adobe Acrobat software and Adobe PDF, COLLAB not only provides clients with online, anytime access to comps, proofs, and other materials, but also saves BD Fox tens of thousands of dollars each year and speeds the review cycle by as much as 50%.

"We send dozens of comps to clients, who subsequently must show them to producers and directors. With input coming from multiple sources, the process can get confusing, lengthy, and costly," explains Chris Hewett, chief technology officer for BD Fox. "COLLAB and Adobe Acrobat keep us and our clients organized, streamlining the review process and distinguishing us from the competition."

An electronic grease pencil

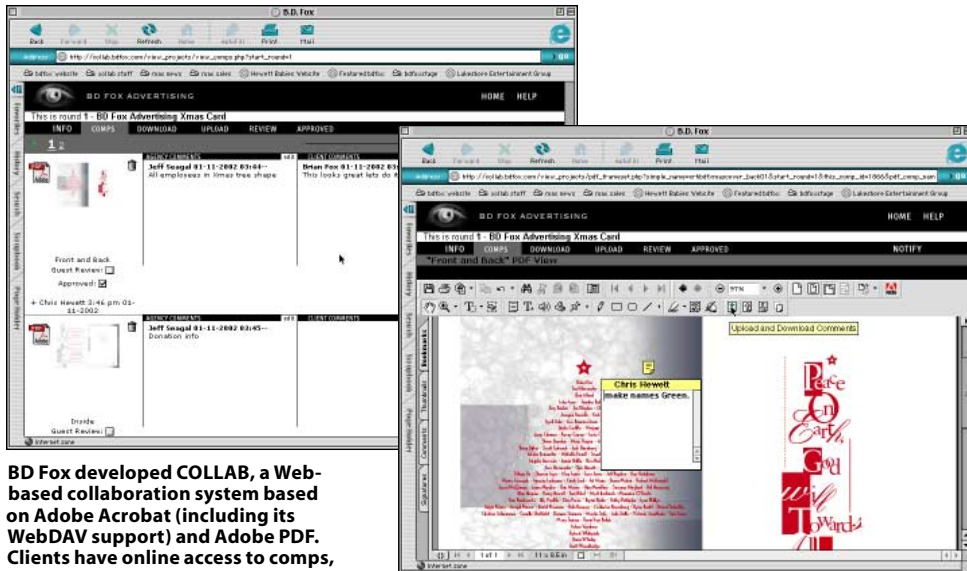
Many Hollywood advertising firms post materials such as movie posters or print and Web ads on the Internet for client review, but BD Fox's COLLAB takes interactive reviews to a new level. The system uses Acrobat electronic commenting features and support for WebDAV, a Web standard protocol supporting a range of collaborative applications, to promote a more efficient ad review process.

The BD Fox creative staff develops comps and proofs using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop software, converts them to Adobe PDF files, and posts them to a Mac OS X server. Custom AppleScript routines automatically open the Adobe PDF files, create three thumbnails in JPEG format, and notify the BD Fox account manager via e-mail that files are ready for posting to a client's folder. Once the files are posted, clients can review the JPEG files to quickly glance at the designs, or the Adobe PDF files to zoom in on details and comment electronically.

"Our industry is very visual, and people are accustomed to using grease pencils to mark up printed color comps or proofs," says Hewett. "Acrobat lets us mimic that process electronically because we retain the exact look of ads, while saving the delays, headaches, and costs associated with sending messengers into movie studios with paper-copy materials."

Automated review

Clients can use the electronic commenting features in Acrobat to make very specific remarks on the Adobe PDF files, even drawing directly on top of an image. They can save comments on the server and automatically share their feedback with others involved in the design and review process. After a client provides comments, for instance, the BD Fox account manager instantly receives an e-mail stating that the new remarks are available. The account manager clicks a link in the e-mail to open the Adobe PDF file containing the comments.



BD Fox developed COLLAB, a Web-based collaboration system based on Adobe Acrobat (including its WebDAV support) and Adobe PDF. Clients have online access to comps, proofs, and other materials in Adobe PDF. Electronic commenting features in Acrobat allow reviewers to make detailed comments and even draw on top of images to provide feedback. BD Fox is saving tens of thousands of dollars each year and has increased the speed of review cycles by as much as 50%.

“With COLLAB and Acrobat, we can communicate with clients in real time more effectively and speed up review cycles by as much as 50%.”

*Chris Hewett
Chief technology officer
BD Fox & Friends Inc. Advertising*

Expanding the team to include additional reviewers, such as directors and producers, is fast and easy. Clients indicate which comps need to be reviewed by whom, and COLLAB dynamically generates a Web page and sends out e-mails with links to the appropriate files. COLLAB also tracks which participants have not yet provided comments—a critical ability because dozens of people can be involved in reviewing posters and ads.

On the same page

Support for WebDAV in Adobe Acrobat further streamlines reviews. Everyone involved makes remarks on the same Adobe PDF file, eliminating issues associated with version control and tracking separate files, and allowing everyone to see each other’s comments. COLLAB also provides an organized, accessible archive of documents in Adobe PDF where clients and BD Fox staff can review comments or search for files as needed. The result is faster, more organized review cycles.

“We are always under tight deadlines, and Acrobat is key to our ability to quickly route materials through review and approval,” says Hewett. “With COLLAB and Acrobat, we can communicate with clients in real time more effectively and speed up review cycles by as much as 50%.”

Improving the bottom line

COLLAB has reduced administration and delivery costs by hundreds of dollars on each project. Eliminating these costs adds up to tens of thousands of dollars

in savings annually and—because BD Fox usually works on a set fee—positively impacts the firm’s bottom line.

In addition to using Acrobat for online collaboration and communication, BD Fox delivers print ads to publications as Adobe PDF files, further reducing delivery costs. Because all the correct fonts, images, and colors are embedded in the Adobe PDF files, BD Fox and its clients can rest assured that ads will print exactly as intended.

“Whenever we reduce administrative costs, we are more profitable,” says Hewett. “But cost was a secondary reason for deploying COLLAB. Most importantly, we wanted to use Acrobat and Adobe PDF to make it easier for clients to work with us than with anyone else.”

TOOLBOX

- Adobe Acrobat
- Adobe Illustrator
- Adobe Photoshop
- COLLAB system
- PCs
- Power Macintosh computers

