KNIGHT FOUNDATION POISED TO REVOLUTIONIZE GRANTMAKING.

with **Dan Schoenfeld**, Director of Grants Administration, Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation grantees told their funder they wanted more transparency and better ways to collaborate. Knight listened and decided to look for a way to become more interactive with its grantees. Their solution? Fluxx.

THE FOUNDATION

Founded in 1940 as an educational fund in Akron, Ohio, now headquartered in Miami, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supports funding for people and programs that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities, and foster the arts. Knight makes 450 to 500 grants a year worth $125 million. The foundation focuses on 26 Knight Communities from Long Beach, Calif. to Biloxi, Miss. About 64 of Knight's internal staff and trustees, as well as more than 300 grantees use Fluxx on a daily basis.

THE CHALLENGE & THE GOAL

Prior to their move to Fluxx, Knight had been using Microedge GIFTS, but was looking for a new system that was going to allow it to have a more interactive role with grantees – to be more collaborative and transparent.

Knight was looking for a system that was configurable and would facilitate a more efficient grantmaking process. At the time, Knight took anywhere from 30 to 60 days to make a grant. And the whole process wasn't transparent, both internally and to Knight's grantees.

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>
> — Dan Schoenfeld

THE SOLUTION

Fluxx is not only a robust, technologically advanced grants management system, it's also highly intuitive. Fluxx dashboards, for example, have given Knight complete visibility and transparency into the entire grantmaking process. "From an efficiency standpoint, it's just night and day," said Dan Schoenfeld, Knight's Director of Grants Administration.

Fluxx was the only vendor that Knight investigated that had a robust grantee portal, according to Schoenfeld. At the time of this writing, Knight has 600 active grantees using the grantee portal while essentially eliminating all paper reporting. "Everything comes through the grantee portal," Schoenfeld said.

Fluxx dashboards and its defined workflow have shifted the accountability to where it needs to be in the foundation, according to Schoenfeld. Before, grants administration would do the majority of the work building the grant, whereas the program staff were the ones making decisions. There's a lot less confusion now. It simplifies an unnecessarily complicated grantmaking process.

The grantee portal allows Knight the ability to provide its grantees budget guides and templates, budget forms, instructions, reference guides, and live video instruction. Before the move to Fluxx, Knight would constantly get phone calls from frustrated grantees. That's not the case anymore, according to Schoenfeld.

> " We have the advantage of being part of the Fluxx community. We could actually revolutionize this space.
>
> – Dan Schoenfeld

Knight is able to be much more transparent to their grantees now, an extremely important goal for the foundation, according to Schoenfeld. For example, if something is pending the president's approval, grantees see the exact status as everyone else at the foundation sees it.

The portability of a cloud-based solution like Fluxx is also a big win for Knight because their program staff travel extensively. "We were in Chicago at the art museum where we've funded several grants in the past," said Shoenfeld. "A reporter asked us what Knight has given to the museum? And about four of us whip out our iPhones and look in Fluxx to see how many grants we've given, at what dollar amount, and when the last grant was given."

Consultation and Implementation:

Knight started their implementation process in April 2012. They spent from April to November building out the system with the Fluxx implementation team. Knight had relatively complex reporting requirements, and was an eager adopter of just about every feature Fluxx offered.

In November, Knight began testing on a staging system until they went live on Jan 7, 2013. From January through March, Knight was live, but wanted staff to be completely comfortable before bringing on the grantees. Knight brought on all of active grantees in March.

Results/ROI:

Fluxx completely changed the way Knight went about the business of making grants. "You don't really think a nonprofit or a foundation needs to deal with efficiency, but when you're talking about grants and grantee relationships, it's not as simple as just giving away money," Schoenfeld said.

To quantify ROI for a grantmaker is a tricky question. "We're not manufacturing widgets," Schoenfeld said. But one way to measure investment is by time. Since implementing Fluxx, Knight has:

Reduced the grantmaking process from 22 steps to 11

Improved grantmaking speed by 60 percent. Soon Knight will be able to make some grants in fewer than four process steps, reducing turnaround time to about a week.

Achieved 100 percent transparency, cutting down on time-intensive phone calls and emails. Grantees can see where their request or grant is anywhere in the approval process.

Reduced grantee mailing packets from 14 pages to 8

Dan Schoenfeld is the director of grants administration at Knight Foundation. Schoenfeld directs the grants administration organization, and promotes activities to support and improve the effectiveness of the foundation's grantmaking abilities.

KF Knight Foundation
Informed & Engaged Communities

Founded in 2010, Fluxx is a San Francisco-based technology company focused on innovation within the grants management ecosystem. Armed with the support and collaboration of many large grantmakers, Fluxx has re-invented the new standard for grants management — empowering both grantmakers and grantseekers to rise above the time consuming day-to-day tasks and focus on their core missions. Fluxx is venture backed by leaders in both Silicon Valley and the Foundation world, Felicis Ventures and the Kresge Foundation, and count hundreds of the leading foundations as customers. To learn more, visit **www.fluxx.io**