



CASE STUDY

SKENDER SAYS “GOODBYE” TO TRADITIONAL CRM AND “HELLO” TO MASSIVE GROWTH





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Skender Construction’s transition from a “glorified Rolodex” style CRM to Membrain supports 25% growth in one year.

ABOUT SKENDER

Chicago-based Skender Construction is an award-winning, full-service general contractor with more than 200 employees and offices in Chicago and San Francisco. Companies rely on Skender to efficiently and effectively manage construction projects of all shapes, sizes, and complexities across multiple sectors. They are consistently recognized for their business innovation, growth, and commitment to their employees.

RAMPING UP OPERATIONS

A growth-oriented company, Skender’s sales organization is constantly looking for new ways to improve sales effectiveness. As part of an organization-wide sales transformation initiative, they made the decision to transition from an existing CRM software to the Membrain platform.



“We needed something better than a glorified Rolodex. Membrain helps us better manage our sales process and get everyone on board.”

Brett Opie, VP Sales

THE LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL CRM

Skender's sales team operates in disparate locations on opposite sides of the United States. Traditional CRM provided the teams with no way of maintaining consistency and communication throughout the sales process.

Additionally, traditional CRMs are difficult to customize on the fly. With Skender's old platform, every change to the way the CRM handled information required the use of programmers to go into the database and change the information in the fields. The difficulty of making changes forced the sales process to operate rigidly rather than dynamically.

"We were like ships passing in the night," says Opie. "People could access each other's files, but they couldn't necessarily see how a deal was progressing or easily identify the relevant information."

THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY FOR **FAST GROWTH**

Transitioning from their old "glorified Rolodex" to Membrain removed the limitations imposed by traditional CRM, while providing Skender's sales teams with the platform they needed to enable fast growth.

Among the many benefits of the new platform, Membrain:

- Makes Skender's sales process easy to understand
- Eliminates complicated work-arounds
- Is intuitive and actionable
- Enables effective knowledge and relationship transfer
- Encourages user adoption

✓ **SUPPORTS THEIR SALES PROCESS**

Natalie O'Connor is a Membrain power user at Skender. She is responsible for maintaining the system, training new users, and keeping everyone accountable to its use. She says that one of the biggest benefits of Membrain is that it helps build a storyline for each customer.

"It helps us maintain constant communication," she says, "not just around when calls were made, but also around what conversations were had, who is involved in the sale, and other relevant information. Not just what the system thinks we should track, but what we really need to track."

✓ **ELIMINATES COMPLICATED WORK-AROUNDS**

Before Membrain, Skender's teams maintained a variety of separate documents for each account and deal, including org charts, project management yearbooks, and spreadsheets of everyone in each relevant industry who might be starting a new project.

"Now all of that is in Membrain," says Opie, "instead of a side document where nobody knows when it was last updated."

Membrain embeds all of these functionalities directly into the salesperson's workflow, so they easily access the info when they need it, and keep it updated in a timely fashion.



✓ IS INTUITIVE AND ACTIONABLE

Accessing information in Skender's old CRM was anything but intuitive. Separating relevant information from the "noise" could be time-consuming. All of that changes with Membrain.

"Even when you're chasing after hundreds of jobs," says O'Connor, "Membrain lets you see at a glance what's going on, where you stand, which direction you're moving, and which ones are looking good and which ones aren't."

Opie adds that Membrain takes it a step further, allowing them to create processes before and after the sale. For instance, they use this functionality to notify their marketing team when a deal is complete. The marketing team picks it up and contacts the new client to take photos of their project and build a case study, which feeds back into the sales process by fueling lead generation.

✓ ENABLES KNOWLEDGE AND RELATIONSHIP TRANSFER

With a glorified Rolodex, "knowledge" transfer essentially consists of passing on contacts and call logs. With Membrain, the transfer is much more nuanced and detailed. For example:

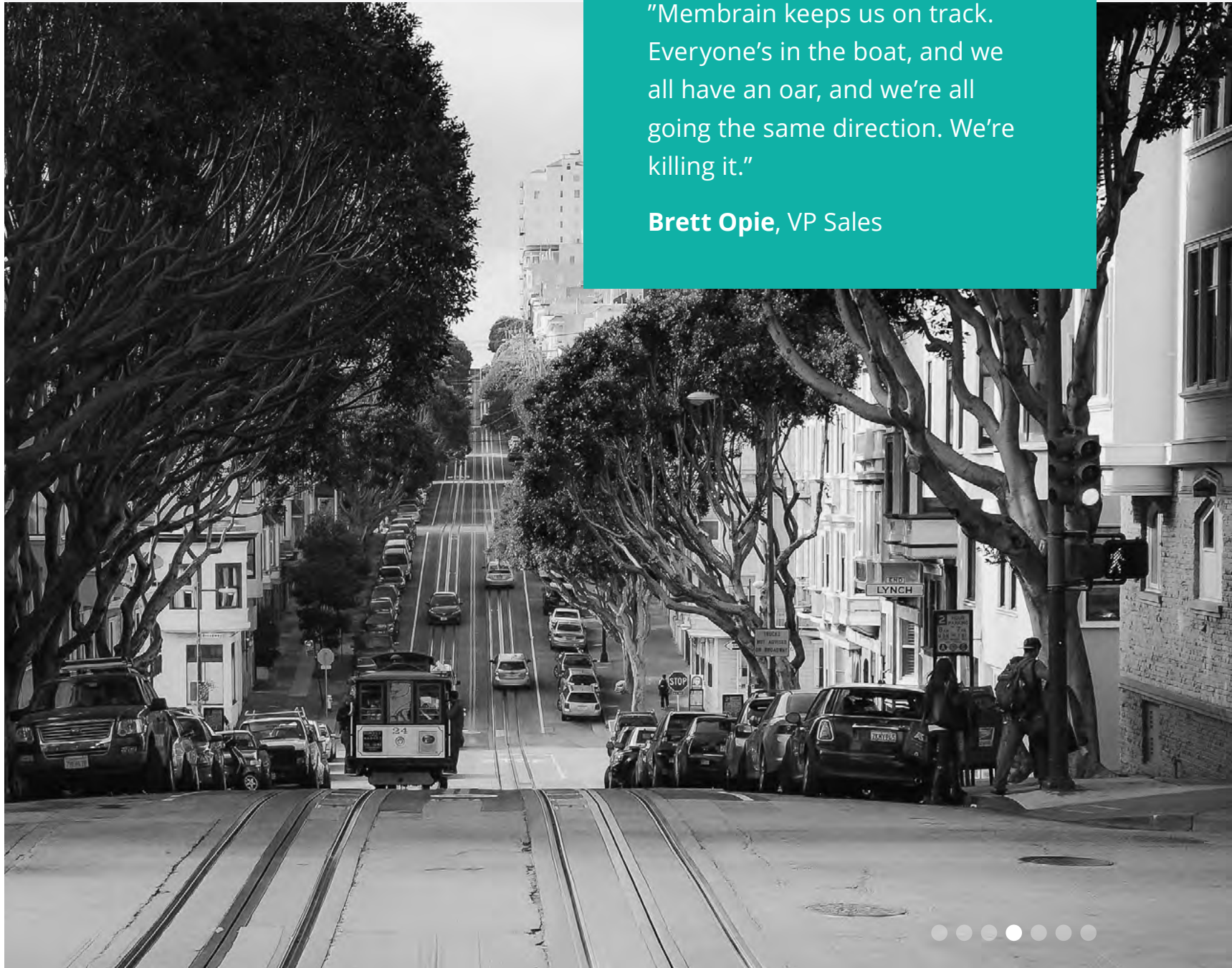
"Our chairman is usually out networking rather than in the office," says Opie. "When he sees an opportunity, he puts it into Membrain and a notification pops up for me. Inside Membrain, he'll include notes about how he and the contact met and what they talked about. This enables us to follow up in a much more personalized manner."

Likewise, as senior salespeople retire or move on to new roles, all of the information and relationships they've built over the years are retained in Membrain in a format that makes it easy for other team members to pick up and go. Instead of saying to an old contact, "I see we called you two months ago," the new salesperson can start with a personal comment like, "You met my colleague at XYZ conference. He said you really bonded over your basketball team."

✓ ENCOURAGES USER ADOPTION

While user adoption for traditional CRM is notoriously low, Skender has had no problem getting salespeople to use Membrain.

"Some people were initially resistant to the change," admits O'Connor, "But knowing what we know now, I don't think anybody wants to go back." Opie agrees: "I can say with a high level of confidence that nobody wants to go back."



"Membrain keeps us on track. Everyone's in the boat, and we all have an oar, and we're all going the same direction. We're killing it."

Brett Opie, VP Sales



“The speed of Membrain’s support team is impressive. I can reach out at almost any time and have a response within 15 minutes.”

Natalie O’Connor, System Admin

IN ACTION: OUTSTRIPPING THE COMPETITION

In the construction industry, things can move fast. When a large company buys a new property or moves to a new location, every construction company in the area pounces on them.

Membrain helps Skender’s teams respond immediately to the news and, more importantly, respond intelligently. For example, Opie says he recently saw a story in the paper about a local company moving to a new location. He knew his sales team was already in contact with the company, so he cut and pasted the article into Membrain, attaching it to the relevant contacts.

Within minutes, everyone on the team knew about the move. Unlike other construction companies, they were equipped to approach the opportunity both immediately and strategically. Instead of everyone calling the same people over and over, they were able to ensure that each contact received only relevant and appropriate communications from the right team members. In some cases, contacts were approached in an organic matter, on the golf course, over dinner, or during service calls on existing projects. In other cases, congratulatory calls were made and conversations started.

Because all of these communications can be logged in Membrain’s mobile app, everyone on the team remains aware of what everyone else is doing in real time. From the customer’s standpoint, that means that while all the other construction companies are hammering them repeatedly with the same messages, Skender is communicating with them in an organic, natural way that builds trust rather than annoyance.

SKENDER'S MAGICAL WISH LIST

While there's no doubt that Membrain has had a significant impact on the way Skender's sales teams work, both Opie and O'Connor agree that what is most impressive about their experience, is the level of support they receive.

"Every other week, our sales team gets together and makes wish lists," says Opie. "We fill up entire whiteboards with everything we wish we could do with our technology. Half of it we think is just crazy and impossible. But every time, Membrain comes back and makes 90% of it happen."

"The speed is impressive, too," says O'Connor. "I can reach out at almost any time and have a response within 15 minutes."

"As a result, Membrain only gets better and easier to use," adds Opie.

ENABLING GROWTH

Skender's sales growth efforts have not gone to waste. In the first year of their initiative, they grew from \$360 million to \$450 million in revenue. Opie attributes this success to a unified effort internally, and says that Membrain has been a critical support.

"It keeps us on track," he says. "Everyone's in the boat, and we all have an oar, and we're all going the same direction. We're killing it."



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