

## Agency for Change Podcast: Corina Ludwig, President, FunctionFox

**Corina Ludwig:**

Live fox heart—every day.

**Announcer:**

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

**Lyn Wineman:**

There is one part of business that there is just no getting around and that is the numbers. With any company, you're constantly checking and rechecking budgets and projections, tracking profitability and planning out timelines. And there are few industries where this is more important than in advertising, where agencies like ours are accountable to the clients we work for and helping creative businesses track all this data in a clean, easy to digest way is no small feat. And that's just what timesheet and project management software company, FunctionFox, has set out to do because according to their website, times have changed and so has keeping track of it. Hey everyone. This is Lyn Wineman, president and chief strategist at KidGlov. Welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change Podcast. Today we're speaking with Corina Ludwig, president of FunctionFox, a company that helps businesses save time, boost productivity, and increase profitability, all great things. Corina, I'm eager to talk with you today. Welcome to the podcast.

**Corina Ludwig:**

Thanks Lyn. Happy to be here.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Ah, it's so good to talk to you. So for our listeners who haven't heard of FunctionFox, which I think is a great name, by the way, could you give us a little bit more background on the company and what it does?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Sure. So we really help creative agencies, that's our target increase productivity and profitability. We've been to doing that for 22 years now.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Wow.

**Corina Ludwig:**

Started in 2000. And we do that specifically through the software that we sell. So it's not glamorous, but it's timesheets and project management software. And really that's helping agency increase their revenue, increase their profitability overall and streamline their workflow so that they can go back to what they love doing, which is really spending more time being creative.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Wow, that is so true because most of us got into advertising because we're not really into tracking numbers and profitability and so forth. So if you can free our minds from doing those tasks, we can open up to new and exciting ideas for our clients. So Corina, before we get too far into discussing all things project management, I'd love to hear more about you. And I've even heard you have a side hustle in a field that's completely separate from the world of project management software. Talk to me a little bit about this.

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah. Those worlds I don't normally talk about, but happy to. So I grew up in the advertising and design business. I went to design school, art school, so I always had the creative side of me, but I've, obviously I've been in business now for many years. And so my side hustle is I have a culinary business.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Oh, wow.

**Corina Ludwig:**

So wedding, special occasion cakes, sort of large-scale cakes for large weddings. And it's been a very separate but true passion. And it's parallel in my work, my daily work because we always say, we always talk about staying creative, focus on the business, but really at the end of the day, you want to stay creative. And so it's a great mix of the left brain and the right brain. And I find that I can be in front of a computer screen all day. And then at the end of the day or on the weekends, I can just really get with my hands and kind get dirty and get away from the screen. So that's my side hustle and it's a lot of fun and I make a little money on the side. And it's always a great show.

**Lyn Wineman:**

It's nice to have that released. Do you have a favorite flavor of cake or you have a favorite thing you like to make?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah, absolutely. Mocha buttercream is my favorite. I can eat that right out of the bowl so.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Wow. Forgive me for a moment while I go out to find some mocha buttercream. That sounds amazing. So, Corina, when you think back to when you first joined FunctionFox, what drew you to the company and what made you stay?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah, so first what first drew me was there was no company. It was an advertising design business. So I had just come back from New York. I was working at Ogilvy & Mather in New York City. And I came back to my hometown, which is Victoria, BC, far west coast of Canada, just above Seattle, for those that don't know exactly where that is. And it was an opportunity. We wanted to change or create a change in the industry. There wasn't really anything for time tracking and project management. There was no well-defined job. There wasn't that official role posted. It wasn't a company yet. It was just a blank slate.

**Corina Ludwig:**

And so the CEO or founder of FunctionFox was running an advertising design agency business called Suburbia Studios, and really was looking for time tracking project management and couldn't find something that was suitable. And so we really, we built it from the ground up. We built it for ourselves and then found that it was something that other agencies could use. So it was really born out of a need, which we find is the best way to build a product. So it's been great.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Ah, so you have got to have a really unique perspective in that you've been in the business. You understand what it's like to be on the receiving side of tasks and timelines and timesheets. That had to have been part of what you've poured into the company, that knowledge.

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah, absolutely. So with a creative background, I was a designer for many years. I was a traffic manager, production manager back in the days of Rubylith. And so I've been in the industry for a long time and there really wasn't anything for that creative industry. And so knowing the language, knowing the product, knowing what the features were that these designers and creative teams needed was exactly what we needed in order to build the product. And other people on our team are from the creative industry as well. So we all poured together to really go okay, we need to do creative briefs this way. We need to have resource allocation. We need to have proper workflow. And really understand from the initial concept all the way through to our project that's been completed, how to handle clients, and projects, and tasks, and assignments and anything from dependencies or whatever it may be that would really help the industry make things more streamlined. And so that again, they can get back to staying creative.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Ah, you're speaking our language there, the things we talk about every single day, creative briefs, timelines, tasks, et cetera. So Corina, I think it's safe to say you are considered a leader in your field. And as I understand it, I'm not the only one who thinks so. You were awarded executive of the year by the

Victoria Innovation, Advanced Technology & Entrepreneurship Council. Can you talk to me about what that award means to you and your reaction to receiving it?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah, it was a little while ago. It was earlier on in my career and I think the best part about that award was I didn't even know of or about it. So we were going to an, like an industry event. I didn't know much about it. My team had nominated me for the award. I didn't know, until they called out the names,

**Lyn Wineman:**

Oh my goodness.

**Corina Ludwig:**

And I won. So,

**Lyn Wineman:**

Wow.

**Corina Ludwig:**

It was sort of like, well, this is cool. It was partially an awards night, but it was an industry night. And so what really cool is my whole team had come together and put up the whole nomination and filled out all the forms. And so that was the most rewarding part about it. And to be recognized in this industry, especially with so many great leaders was a real honor. So I'm proud of that award and yeah, it's still something I'm fond of.

**Lyn Wineman:**

That is fantastic. I hope you didn't have to get up and make a speech or anything.

**Corina Ludwig:**

I did. I did.

**Lyn Wineman:**

You did. Oh my goodness.

**Corina Ludwig:**

I think I was very short for words because it was just so overwhelming for me, but I managed to get up on stage and accept the award and quickly run off the stage and it was all fine.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Fantastic. Probably all for the best. Otherwise,

**Corina Ludwig:**

It was.

**Lyn Wineman:**

You would've spent forever writing a speech and it probably was,

**Corina Ludwig:**

It was great.

**Lyn Wineman:**

A very charming moment. So, you've also been described, and this is probably part of the reason your team nominated you, you've been described as the glue that keeps the company together. Why might your colleagues refer to you at this? And are there some ways that you've tried to leave a lasting impact at FunctionFox?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah, for me, the backbone of any company is team and culture. If we take care of ourselves and we take care of our team, then we can better care for our clients. And I think that goes for any industry or any field that you're in. We spend so much time at work and we really need to enjoy what we do. I think if you're really enjoying what you're doing, you're having fun, the teams having fun. That's going to be really reflective in how you help your clients and how you solve problems. And you're just more open to change and to new ideas. So over the 22 years, we've had lots of staff, but we've had 11 people that have asked for their job back. So I think we're doing something right. And that's the kind of impression whether it be just treating people like people, understanding them and not reading them like an asset or a number, but really understanding them as a human being that's coming to the table that wants to do their best every day.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Corina, I love the way you just said that. I am of the same school of thought in that if we take care of our team, our team will take care of the clients and the quality of the work. And to a certain extent the profitability, right? That you trust that team and make sure they're happy and then let them go home happy, which I think is an important thing as well. So at the top of the show, we talked about how one of the things FunctionFox does is helps agencies increased profitability and efficiency because that's something we're always looking for. Can you talk a bit about how you accomplish that for your clients?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah. And I could spend an hour on this topic alone. Really, the testimonials that we see from clients, they say that they've doubled their revenue. They've reduced it many that time by 50%, they've

streamlined their workflow to give them more time and help them accomplish their goals. So we're really proud of those kinds of statements. Primarily, we've done this by looking at their current process and their current goals, and then helping them track more billable hours. At the end of the day, it's about tracking your time and billing more hours. What goes into that is allocating resources more effectively, producing more comprehensive reporting so they can understand where their time is going, where they can increase their billable hours and then ultimately increasing their pricing. So we have the advantage to help them because we're working with thousands of firms in a similar space and there's great shared learning and efficiencies from that.

**Corina Ludwig:**

So we can say, did you know that people in your sector, people in your region are charging for X? Oh, I didn't have an idea of that. Like for example, travel time, people don't think that you need to charge for travel. If you're going to a client for a meeting that travel time should be included and should be charged for. People don't necessarily, or specifically prior to COVID, they weren't charging for that.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Yeah.

**Corina Ludwig:**

So those little tips can actually make a big difference. We can combine some of the roles, combine some of the functions or things that they were doing manually before are now done automatically in the FunctionFox system. So it makes it a lot more streamlined and they can use that time that they've saved to do more billable work or higher paid creative time.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Wow. That all sounds really fantastic. So it sounds like, obviously, you work with a lot of agencies. You just gave me a big number there. You've seen a lot of data around projects and timesheets. What are some of the top trends you've observed Corina?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah. In terms of trends, there's lots of things that are COVID-specific trends that we've seen in the last couple years. So for example, timesheets are still important, but the pricing structures have changed, so more value based pricing, less retainers. Clients tend to be over servicing clients there. So agency should still track time, but it's primarily billing on value based. And so that's one trend we're definitely seeing more value-based pricing. COVID has had an impact on agencies in the way they need to stay financially viable. So some of them that are very niche oriented, for example, if they were focused on tourism or travel, they've had to take projects outside of their normal realm. They have to branch out and go more globally just based on what they were doing in terms of their niche.

**Corina Ludwig:**

And then the other term that we're seeing like real estate, there's sometimes it's a buyer's market. Sometimes it's a seller's market. Agencies are trending towards in-house. They've been doing that for a few years, and we see that ebb and flow for sure. And although they don't necessarily bill internally, management loves seeing those timesheets and it brings greater value and greater transparency. So that's definitely a trend that I think is going to continue for quite a while, for sure. And then because of COVID, lots of agencies are selling their building if they owned that, or they're downsizing to a smaller space, they're using a co-working space and employees are happier overall because there's lots of benefits to that. I think that's a whole other show as well, but they've had to, the agencies have had to adjust and be more flexible, which has changed their culture. And for the most part for the better.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Yeah. Corina before the pandemic, I have always said, agency work is a team sport and I couldn't have imagined effectively working remotely, but after two years, our team has really proven that they're very effective and maybe even more productive working remotely. We still like to have our office space and people come in two to three days a week, but the remote work just really opens up doors to bringing in new team members from other locations to all kinds of lifestyle perks. So I think that's really great.

**Lyn Wineman:**

The other trend we have observed at KidGlov is during the pandemic, we had to start marketing ourselves. And I think it's really interesting. A lot of agencies, we are steeped in marketing and advertising every day, but yet we fall back on networking and receiving RFPs for marketing ourselves. And we flipped that and said, you know what, we're going to start treating ourselves like a client. And the great thing is marketing and advertising works. It's just paid amazing dividends for us too. So kind of another trend. So Corina, if you look inside that crystal ball you have, what would you say is next for FunctionFox in the next five to 10 years?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah. Great question. Could anyone have predicted, I guess there were some people that predicted COVID, but I-

**Lyn Wineman:**

Very few.

**Corina Ludwig:**

Very few. Right.

**Lyn Wineman:**

And we weren't. If they were predicting it, we were not listening to them. So yeah.

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah. So you have to be ready for anything that comes your way. Right. We've always had a strong and stable team and the product, we've been very focused on the creative industry. So I see that continuing at least for the next five to 10 years. And no one can really predict the future, but for FunctionFox, I always see a bright path and great people and solid products.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Fantastic. That's great. Corina, I'm about to ask you my favorite question here. People who listen to the podcast know that I am inspired by motivational quotes. If I turn my computer around, you'd see them on the wall next to me and in my notebook. And I would love a Corina Ludwig original quote for our listeners.

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah. I'm a big quote believer as well. And I have lots of inspiring sayings and motivational accolades that help me. For our team, our quote is live Fox HEART every day. And so what that means is our core values are heart. And there's a word for each one. So HEART represents helpful, so H for helpful, E for excellence, A for awesome attitudes, R for resourcefulness, and T for trust. So when we say, do you have HEART? Are you putting HEART into it? Living the Fox HEART every day, we're doing that not only for the company, for our culture and our team, but for our clients. And so those words resonate with everybody on our team and that carries through to our clients. So, live Fox HEART every day.

**Lyn Wineman:**

I love that. What a rallying cry you have for your team there. That is fantastic. So Corina, for our listeners who would like to learn more about your work, more about FunctionFox, how can they find you?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah. Sure. So Corina Ludwig on LinkedIn. That's an easy one. And [functionfox.com](http://functionfox.com), like the animal Fox. And we offer free resources. There are free demos, webinars, one on one calls, if you want to learn more, a little bit about FunctionFox to see if it can work for your team. And I encourage you to reach out to me on LinkedIn, love to hear your feedback on this podcast, or just have a conversation about your agency. We're really about giving advice and helping people, not just selling a software product. I think, sure that's at the end of the day, how we continue to function, but where we really get our passion is helping people.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Ah, Corina, you're obviously a very smart marketer as well. So that's fantastic. So as we wrap up our time together today, what is the most important thing you would like our listeners to remember about the work that you're doing?

**Corina Ludwig:**

Yeah. We're just here for change. We're here to help, specifically in the areas of increased revenues, workflow, and clarity on your business.

**Lyn Wineman:**

Ah, fantastic. Corina, I fully believe the world needs more people like you. Thank you for taking time to share with us today.

**Corina Ludwig:**

Thanks Lyn. Appreciate it.

**Announcer:**

We hope you enjoyed today's Agency for Change podcast. To hear all our interviews with those who are making a positive change in our communities, or to nominate a changemaker you'd love to hear from, visit KidGlov.com at K-I-D-G-L-O-V.com to get in touch. As always, if you like what you've heard today, be sure to rate, review, subscribe, and share. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.