

CASE STUDY



MORE PROFITABLE DECISIONS THROUGH COMMUNICATION



Pinion

TYPE Financial services provider

LOCATION Oxford, MS

SPECIALITIES Agricultural
finance, credit management,
crop insurance, economics,
equipment trades, farm
management, land sales,
and risk management.

EMPLOYEES 201-500

"I advise all growers to join the Agworld platform so they can collaborate with the important stakeholders of their farming operation such as financial advisor or agronomist."

Alan Grafton
Pinion, Oxford, MS.



CHALLENGE

Pinion's team aims to improve their service offerings to their grower clients by moving towards a more dynamic way of communication. By improving their way of communicating they want to be able to easily create improved metrics on a more detailed level for their growers to empower them to make more profitable decisions.

SOLUTION

Pinion Director Alan Grafton realized that, in order to overcome this challenge, the team would have to move away from using spreadsheets for their farm planning as they do not allow for two-way dynamic communication. After testing many different software solutions and speaking to their users, the decision was clear to partner with Agworld utilizing the company's platform and implement it within their own organization as well as their clients'.

RESULT

Because of implementing Agworld, Pinion has been able to start the transition away from using static PDF's and spreadsheets as a way of communicating and are now collaborating with many growers in the Agworld platform. As a result information can flow more freely between stakeholders, leading to better and more accurate information on a more detailed (field) level. The Pinion team is now able to provide better services and more accurate information to many of their growers, which allows these growers to make better and more profitable decisions.



A long history of servicing agriculture

Pinion is a financial services and consultancy provider with roots dating back to 1932. With their core values of collaboration, exploration and taking initiative, they service clients in the agricultural production, manufacturing and distribution industries. With 21 offices in the Western, Mid-West and Deep South of the United States, their footprint is a clear testimony of their agricultural client base.

One of Pinion's services specifically geared towards growers is called AgKnowledge, which is led by industry veteran Alan Grafton. The AgKnowledge team specializes in providing growers anywhere in the US with CFO-level counsel and financial and accounting support of all levels. Director Alan Grafton has almost 25 years of experience in this space: "I started off working in the



credit department of an ag retailer where I was first exposed to the financial planning side of farming. From there I started my own business AgKnowledge, back in 2000, with a strong focus on planning and helping growers track their operations. After growing AgKnowledge rapidly for a number of years, it made sense to become part of a large organization with a variety of resources available to my clients, so we became part of Pinion."

"With working in the same industry for a long time one can experience the burden of legacy systems that are deeply ingrained in an organization and that are hard to change. This is exactly what we were seeing in respect to our use of spreadsheets: we used them for many different things in our organization but, we realized that the time of using spreadsheets for everything is rapidly coming to an end. So we knew that, in order to stay at the forefront of our industry, we had to make sure we moved with the times and find a better and more sophisticated farm planning solution that could form the base for our services for many years to come."

Preparing for the future

When Pinion decided to adopt a data-driven farm planning and management platform, they realized that choosing the right platform that would not only benefit them, but their grower clients as well, would be key. Alan adds: “We vetted many platforms, not only by demoing them but also by talking to current users. Once we decided that Agworld was the platform that offers the most to financial service providers like us, as well as to our growers, we made sure to contact customers that were already utilizing Agworld to talk about their experience. In the end, there is nothing more important than user-experience and clients’ feedback about Agworld as a product and how they perceive the service level at Agworld. Once we spoke to current clients, the decision to partner up with Agworld was quickly made.”

Alan continues: “We help our growers by helping them plan, but also by consulting them on other parts of their operation and benchmarking their results. This is really where Agworld helps us in a big way: when a grower wants to try something new, we can just adjust the plan in Agworld and the grower can see the results on his end straight away. Or, they can even make changes to plans on their end and then automatically sync this through to me as well. This process really improves our decision-making capability by being a lot more dynamic way of communicating. No more working on old PDF’s or complicated spreadsheets; grower and consultant both have the latest and most up-to-date data set and are able to let it reflect their plans and ideas.”

“In farming, like in any other industry, you need to know your current metrics before you can trial new things, so you have a baseline to measure trials against. Crop growers survive and thrive through innovating and constantly improving their results; especially when macro-economic factors might be working against them, they have to keep improving their operation. It is our job to help make sure our growers innovate where it makes financial sense, and Agworld helps us ensure our advice is always accurate.”

Maximizing grower profit

Working for an organization that dates back to 1932 also comes with the responsibility to keep looking toward the future, Alan: “When I think about the future of Pinion and AgKnowledge, I feel that the success of our grower clients is the main factor that is going to decide our future. So, when we were able to adopt a platform that allows us to collaborate more closely with our clients, it felt like a no-brainer. We started using Agworld early in 2018 and after getting used to it ourselves, we are now very passionate about getting our growers to join us on the same platform. Instead of growers just seeing the reports we can create in Agworld, I am passionate about them being able to access the same tools and data that we have access to.”

“With using spreadsheets we were able to look at corn as a whole for instance or cotton or any other crop overall as a profit center. By using Agworld, we can now turn an individual field into a profit center, so it just provides greater information. I hear many growers and other organizations talk about yield maps



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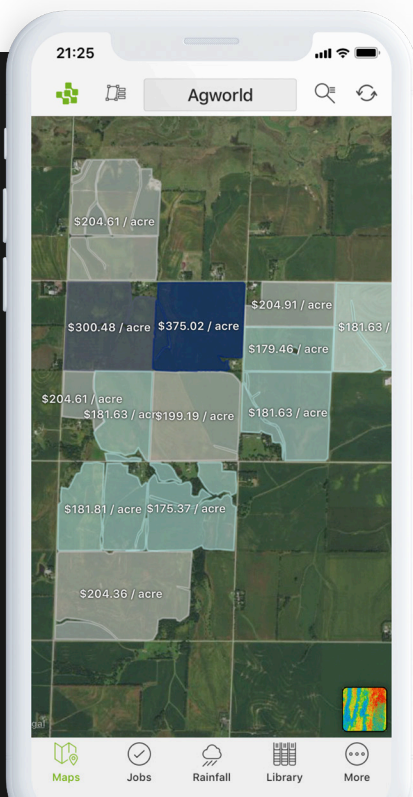
Pinion, Oxford, MS.





and other geospatial information, but that technology is just not at a stage yet where it can provide business intelligence of the magnitude that our growers and advisers need in order to base farming strategies on it. And that is what any digital tool a grower might use should be based on: enabling them to maximize their profit. And not just sometimes, but year in year out and for every crop they grow.”

“From where I sit, I see Agworld as a tool that is available and working well today and that offers growers assistance in improving their operation. I see many other tools that hold great promise for the future, but without fail they will tell you that they are just not quite there yet. This is why I advise all growers to join the Agworld platform, so they can collaborate with the important stakeholders of their farming operation such as financial advisor or agronomist, but also so that they can start benefiting from the technology that is available now. There are always new technological advancements around the corner, but I suggest we need to start using what is available to help us thrive now: Agworld.”



IMPROVING PROFITABILITY IN AGRICULTURE

WHAT AGWORLD OFFERS YOU

- Collect data at every level in a structured way.
- Easily share data with anyone important to your organisation.
- Un-paralleled insights into your operation.
- Empowers you to make more profitable decisions.

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